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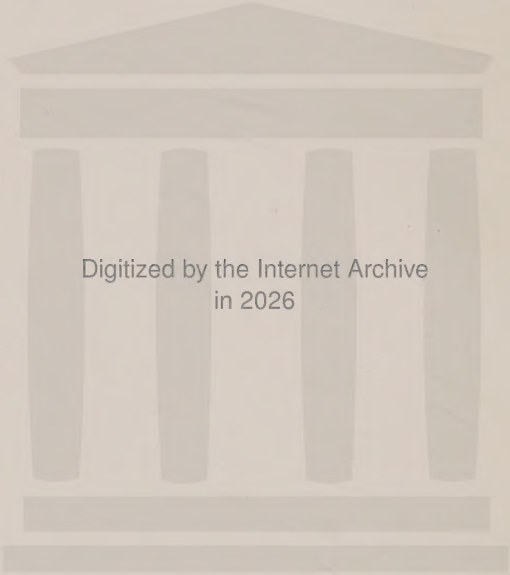
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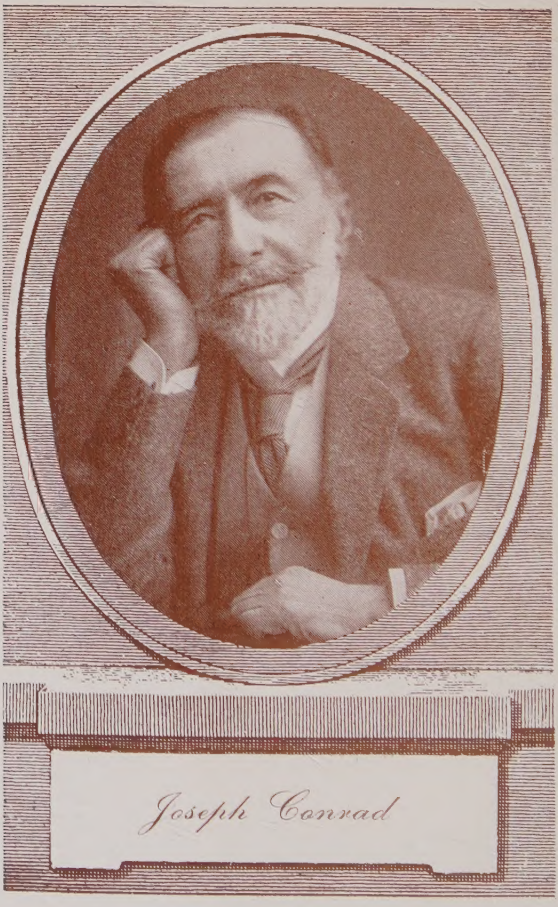

Joseph Conrad

THE
POCKET UNIVERSITY

VOLUME XVII PART I

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
WRITERS

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WRITERS

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

[Professor George E. Woodberry, an eminent poet and critic, in his "America in Literature," published by Harper & Brothers, New York, 1905, says this of Longfellow:

"'His trust, his humility, his hospitality to the joys and sorrows of domestic life, his tenderness, his consolation, his noble nature, his just taste in what to say and what to leave unsaid about the crises of lives not tragic, but touched with human things that have been and may be again,' his companionableness for souls not over-strenuous, but full of all the pieties of life endearing life — these things give him long lease of fame. Within his unemphatic range he has an unsuspected variety, and thereby expresses without weariness, except to the life-jaded, an American nature of such sweetness, refinement, and purity, that it has become almost exemplary of an ideal of the literary life on this soil.

"Hiawatha, Evangeline, and Miles Standish, each remains the only successful poem of its kind — one of Indian life, one of the Colonial pastoral, one of the Puritan idyl — while the trials made by others have been numerous. In each of these, and especially in the first and second, there is in quality a marvellous purity of tone which, for those who are sensitive to it, is one of the rarest of poetic pleasures. . . ."

Referring to his shorter poems:

"If Heaven ever grants the prayer that a poet may write the songs of a people, it is surely in such poems as these that the divine gift reveals its presence. They are in the mouths of children and on the lips of boys, and it is well; but they are also strength and consolation to older hearts. They are read in quiet hours, they are murmured in darkened rooms, they blend with the sacred experiences of many lives. The Psalm of Life is a trumpet-call. A music breathes from Resignation in which the clod on the

coffin-lid ceases to be heard and dies out of the ear at last with peace."]

Early Impressions

"Out of my childhood," wrote Mr. Longfellow, in later years, "rises in my memory the recollection of many things rather as poetic impressions than as prosaic facts. Such are the damp mornings of early spring, with the loud crowing of cocks and the cooing of pigeons on roofs of barns. Very distinct in connection with these are the indefinite longings incident to childhood; feelings of wonder and loneliness which I could not interpret and scarcely take cognisance of. But they have remained in my mind."

Aspires After Eminence in Literature

[to his father]

December 5, 1824.
[In his eighteenth year]

I take this early opportunity to write to you, because I wish to know fully your inclination with regard to the profession I am to pursue when I leave college.

For my part, I have already hinted to you what would best please me. I want to spend one year at Cambridge for the purpose of reading history, and of becoming familiar with the best authors in polite literature; whilst at the same time I can be acquiring a knowledge of the Italian language, without an acquaintance with

which I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful departments of letters. The French I mean to understand pretty thoroughly before I leave college. After leaving Cambridge I would attach myself to some literary periodical publication, by which I could maintain myself and still enjoy the advantages of reading. Now, I do not think that there is anything visionary or chimerical in my plan thus far. The fact is — and I will not disguise it in the least, for I ought not — I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it. There may be something visionary in *this*, but I flatter myself that I have prudence enough to keep my enthusiasm from defeating its own object by too great haste. Surely, there never was a better opportunity offered for the exertion of literary talent in our own country than is now offered. To be sure, most of our literary men thus far have not been professedly so, until they have studied and entered the practice of Theology, Law, or Medicine. But this is evidently lost time. I do believe that we ought to pay more attention to the opinion of philosophers, that "nothing but Nature can qualify a man for knowledge."

Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing, that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be

by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief, I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of the law.

Here, then, seems to be the starting point: and I think it best to float out into the world upon that tide and in that channel which will the soonest bring me to my destined port, and not to struggle against both wind and tide and by attempting what is impossible lose everything.

"Wreck of the Hesperus"

(DIARY)

December 30, 1839. — I wrote last night a notice of Allston's poems. After which I sat till twelve o'clock by my fire, smoking, when suddenly it came into my mind to write the Ballad of the Schooner *Hesperus*; which I accordingly did. Then I went to bed, but could not sleep. New thoughts were running in my mind, and I got up to add them to the ballad. It was three by the clock. I then went to bed and fell asleep. I feel pleased with the ballad. It hardly cost me an effort. It did not come into my mind by lines but by stanzas.

"The Belfry of Bruges"

(DIARY)

May 30, 1824. — In the evening took the railway from Ghent to Bruges. Stopped at

"La Fleur de Blé," attracted by the name, and found it a good hotel. It was not yet night; and I strolled through the fine old streets and felt myself a hundred years old. The chimes seemed to be ringing incessantly; and the air of repose and antiquity was delightful. . . . Oh those chimes, those chimes, how deliciously they lull one to sleep! The little bells, with their clear liquid notes, like the voices of boys in a choir, and the solemn bass of the great bell tolling in, like the voice of a friar!

31st.— Rose before five and climbed the high belfry which was once crowned by the gilded copper dragon now at Ghent. The carillon of forty-eight bells; the little chamber in the tower; the machinery like a huge barrel organ, with keys like a musical instrument for the *carilloneur* (ringer); the view from the tower; the singing of swallows with the chimes; the fresh morning air; the mist in the horizon; the red roofs far below; the canal, like a silver clasp, linking the city with the sea — how much to remember!

"Evangeline"

(diary)

December 15, 1846. — Stayed at home, working a little at Evangeline; planning out the second part, which fascinates me, — if I can but give complete tone and expression to it. Of materials for this part there is superabundance. The difficulty is to select, and to give unity to variety.

17th.—Finished this morning, and copied, the first canto of the second part of Evangeline. The portions of the poem which I write in the morning, I write chiefly standing at my desk here by the window, so as to need no copying. What I write at other times is scrawled with a pencil on my knee in the dark, and has to be written out afterward. This way of writing with a pencil and portfolio I enjoy much, as I can sit by the fireside and do not use my eyes. I see a panorama of the Mississippi advertised. This comes very apropos. The river comes to me instead of my going to the river; and as it is to flow through the pages of the poem, I look upon this as a special benediction.

To a Sympathetic Reviewer

[to john s. dwight]

December 10, 1847.

I should have written sooner to thank you for your most friendly and cordial notice of Evangeline in the *Harbinger*, but by some adverse fate I could not get a copy of the paper until some ten or fifteen days after its publication. It would hardly be modest in me to tell you how much satisfaction it gave me. But, setting modesty aside, I thank you for it very heartily, and this rather for the sympathy than the praise. There are so many persons who rush forward in front of one, and seizing one's Pegasus

by the rein give him such a jerk as to make his mouth bleed, that I always feel grateful to any one who is willing to go a few paces side by side with me. I think you will agree with me that what a writer asks of his reader is not so much to *like* as to *listen*. You I have to thank for both.

The Toil of Teaching at Harvard

(DIARY)

April 3, 1848. — It seems like folly to record the college days — the working in the crypts of life, the underground labour. Pardon me, O ye souls who seeing education only from afar speak of it in such glowing words! You see only the great pictures hanging in the light; not the grinding of the paint and oil, nor the pulling of hair from the camel's back for the brushes.

Death of his Mother

(DIARY)

March 12, 1851. — As I was going to college this afternoon, I met a boy bringing a telegraphic despatch from Portland. My heart failed me at the sight and foretold its contents. They were, "Your mother died to-day suddenly." In a few minutes I was on my way to Portland, where I arrived before midnight. In the chamber where I last took leave of her lay my mother, to welcome and take leave of me no more. I sat all that night alone with her —

without terror, almost without sorrow, so tranquil had been her death. A sense of peace came over me, as if there had been no shock or jar in nature, but a harmonious close to a long life.

The Cross of Snow

In 1861 the poet's wife died as the result of a most tragical fire. In the poet's Life by Mr. Samuel Longfellow, his brother, we are told:

"Eighteen years afterward, looking over, one day, an illustrated book of Western scenery, his attention was arrested by a picture of that mysterious mountain (in Colorado) upon whose lonely, lofty breast the snow lies in long furrows that make a rude but wonderfully clear image of a vast cross. At night, as he looked upon the pictured countenance of his wife that hung upon his chamber wall, his thoughts framed themselves into the verses that follow. He put them away in his portfolio, where they were found after his death. That has removed from them the seal of secrecy."

In the long sleepless watches of the night,
A gentle face — the face of one long dead —
Looks at me from the wall, where round its head
The night lamp casts a halo of pale light.

Here in this room she died; and soul more white
Never through martyrdom of fire was led
To its repose; nor can in books be read
The legend of a life more benedight.

There is a mountain in the distant West
That, sun-defying, in its deep ravines
Displays a cross of snow upon its side,
Such is the cross I wear upon my breast

These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes
And seasons, changeless since the day she died.

July 10, 1879.

On the Death of a Little Child

[to ——]

April 23, 1862.

Your letter and your poems have touched me very much. Tears fell down my cheeks as I read them, and I think them very true and tender expressions of your sense of loss.

So the little ones fade and fall, like blossoms wafted away by the wind! But the wind is the breath of God, and the falling blossoms perfume the air, and the remembrance of them is sweet and sacred.

In our greatest sorrows we must not forget that there is always some one who has a greater sorrow, or at all events a more recent one; and that may give us courage, though it cannot give us comfort.

On Translating

[to John Neal]

August 2, 1867.

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter yesterday, and am very happy to get your

hearty approval of my attempt to tell the exact truth of Dante. A great many people think that a translation ought not to be too faithful; that the writer should put *himself* into it as well as his original; that it should be Homer and Co., or Dante and Co.; and that what the foreign author really says should be falsified or modified, if thereby the smoothness of the verse can be improved. On the contrary I maintain — and am delighted that you agree with me — that a translator, like a witness on the stand, should hold up his right hand and swear to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." You, who all your life long have been fighting for the truth in all things, without fear or favour, could not, I am sure, think otherwise.

Bores

TO G. W. GREENE

September, 16, 1870.

We returned yesterday from Nahant all in good condition, sailing up the harbour in a yacht in the lovely September day. Entering the old house again was like coming back from Europe. I had a kind of dazed feeling, a kind of familiar unfamiliar sense of place. But in the evening one of my most intimate bores came in, saying, "I did not know that you had got back, but thought I would come up and see." So he came up and saw, and — I knew that I was in Cambridge.

This fact was still further confirmed to-day; for immediately after breakfast came one of my crazy women, and I had no sooner disposed of her than there appeared another bore, who occasionally frequents these forests — huge, Hycranian, hopeless! There can be no doubt of the fact, I am certainly in Cambridge.

While I was writing the last line an Irishwoman called with a petition to the Governor to pardon her son, in prison for theft, "that he may become what he is capable of being, — an honour to his family and the community."

"The Divine Tragedy"

(from a journal)

January 6, 1871.—The subject of the Divine Tragedy has taken entire possession of me, so that I can think of nothing else. All day pondering upon and arranging it.

7th.—I find all hospitalities and social gatherings just now great interruptions. But perhaps it is for the best [that I have them]. I should work too hard, and perhaps not so well.

8th. During the last week I have written five scenes [in the Tragedy].

Could Not Poetize at Will

to florence a ——

November 20, 1871.

I have put off answering your nice little note from day to day; but, as you see, I have not

forgotten it. I have been hoping all along that some lines of poetry, such as you ask for, would come into my mind. But they would not, and so I have to write you in prose, not to keep you waiting any longer.

If you will ask your papa, who knows all about it, he will tell you that good poems do not always come to one's mind when wanted. Verses — yes, one can write those at any time; but real poetry — that is another matter. I think good prose is better than bad verse. I do not say bad *poetry*, because when it is bad, it is no longer poetry.

And so I send you this little note instead of a little song; and with it good wishes for your birthday, and kind remembrances for your father.

At Seventy

TO G. W. CHILDS

March 13, 1877.

You do not know yet what it is to be seventy years old. I will tell you, so that you may not be taken by surprise when your turn comes. It is like climbing the Alps. You reach a snow-crowned summit, and see behind you the deep valley stretching miles and miles away, and before you other summits higher and whiter, which you may have strength to climb, or may not. Then you sit down and meditate and wonder which it will be. That is the whole story,

amplify it as you may. All that one can say is that life is opportunity.

Co-education

TO MISS ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

August 21, 1878.

I thank you for the paragraph on Co-education. That is a difficult problem to solve. I know that life, like French poetry, is imperfect without the feminine rhyme. But I remember how much time I lost at the Academy, in my boyhood, looking across the schoolroom at the beautiful rhyme. Perhaps, after all, it was not lost time, but a part of my education. Of what woman was it said that "to know her was a liberal education," and who said it?* Certainly there is something more in education than is set down in the school-books. Whittier has touched the point very poetically in that little lyric of his called "In School Days."

From His Table Talk

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

As turning the logs will make a dull fire burn, so change of studies a dull brain.

* It was Steele who said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, under the name of Aspasia, that to "love her was a liberal education." *The Tatler, No.* 49.

The laws of nature are just, but terrible. There is no weak mercy in them. Cause and consequence are inseparable and inevitable. The elements have no forbearance. The fire burns, the water drowns, the air consumes, the earth buries. And perhaps it would be well for our race if the punishment of crimes against the laws of man were as inevitable as the punishment of crimes against the laws of nature — were man as unerring in his judgments as nature.

In the mouths of many men soft words are like roses that soldiers put into the muzzle of their muskets on holidays.

We often excuse our own want of philanthropy by giving the name of fanaticism to the more ardent zeal of others.

Every great poem is in itself limited by necessity — but in its suggestions unlimited and infinite.

When we reflect that all the aspects of nature, all the emotions of the soul, and all the events of life have been the subjects of poetry for hundreds and thousands of years, we can hardly wonder that there should be so many resemblances and coincidences of expression among poets, but rather that they are not more numerous and striking.

The first pressure of a sorrow crushes out from our hearts the best wine; afterward the

constant weight of it brings forth bitterness — the taste and stain from the lees of the vat.

Perseverance is a great element of success. If you only knock long enough and loud enough at the gate, you are sure to wake up somebody.

There are but few thinkers in the world, but a great many people who think they think.

A great part of the happiness of life consists not in fighting battles, but in avoiding them. A masterly retreat is in itself a victory.

In old age our bodies are worn out instruments, on which the soul in vain tries to play the melodies of youth. But because the instrument has lost its strings, or is out of tune, it does not follow that the musician has lost his skill.

So innate and strong is the love of liberty in all human hearts that, even against our better judgment, we instinctively sympathise with criminals escaping from prison.

Nothing is more dangerous to an author than sudden success. The patience of genius is one of its most precious attributes.

It is a great mystery to many people that an author should reveal to the public secrets that he shrinks from telling to his most intimate friends.

More and more do I feel as I advance in life, how little we really know of each other. Friend-

ship seems to me like the touch of musical glasses — it is only contact; but the glasses themselves, and their contents, remain quite distinct and unmingled.

The highest exercise of imagination is not to devise what has no existence, but rather to perceive what really exists, though unseen by the outward eye — not creation, but insight.

How sudden and sweet are the visitations of our happiest thoughts; what delightful surprises! In the midst of life's most trivial occupations — as we are reading a newspaper, or lighting our bed-candle, or waiting for our horses to drive round — the lovely face appears; and thoughts more precious than gold are whispered in our ear.

Style is the gait of the mind, and is as much a part of the man as his bodily gait is.

The difference between a man of genius seen in his works and in his person, is like that of a light-house seen by night and by day — in the one case only a great fiery brain, in the other only a white tower.

What discord should we bring into the universe if our prayers were all answered! Then *we* should govern the world, and not God. And do you think we should govern it better? It gives me only pain when I hear the long, wearisome petitions of men asking for they know not what. As frightened women clutch at the

reins when there is danger, so do we grasp at God's government with our prayers. Thanksgiving with a full heart—and the rest silence and submission to the divine will!

The Shaping of "Excelsior"

[The following pages have been taken from an essay in "Men of Letters" by the late Horace E. Scudder, permission being granted by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, who published the book and own the copyright.]

Spread open in one of the cases of the Harvard University Library are the first and second drafts of "Excelsior," and a rare chance is given of seeing how a poet, when he has seized upon the central thought of a poem, will sometimes work industriously at its final form. The first draft was written upon the blank spaces of a letter from Charles Sumner.

The first stanza, with its erasures, is as follows:—

The shades of night were falling fast

When through an Alpine village pass'd
~~through~~ snow and ice
bore ~~above all price~~
'mid
A youth who ~~as the peasant sung~~

A banner with the strange device

~~Responded in an unknown tongue,~~

Excelsior!

The poet's first attempt was at a contrasted image of the peasant's humble life with its contentment, and the aspiration of the youth unintelligible to the peasant in the valley. It was too soon to introduce this contrast; he resolved to show the youth only, not speaking, but silently displaying his symbol, precious however to himself. Then the preciousness appeared commonplace or necessarily involved in the very action of the youth, and the poet returned to the idea of a contrast, but this time a contrast of cold, indifferent nature and passionate, spiritual man. What an immense advance in fulness of expression! It is curious, however, that in the second draft, on another paper, also preserved, the poet returned to this idea and tried again—

A youth who bore a pearl of price,—

possibly seeking to connect the image with the Biblical one in order to suggest the interpretation of his parable by linking it with an accepted image of spiritual contempt of the world. There is a slight verbal correction also in *'mid* for *through*, as if the physical difficulty of *through ice* annoyed him. The second stanza in the first draft reads:

his eye beneath
His brow was sad; ~~but underneath~~

Flash'd like a falchion from its sheath

~~His steel blue eye~~
rung
And like a silver clarion ~~sung,~~
The accents of that
~~His sweet voice in an~~ unknown tongue,

Excelsior!

Here he was dissatisfied as soon as he had half completed the third line, for he had finished the idea and had half a line to spare. He went back, struck out *but underneath*, wrote *his eye beneath*, which instantly gave him the compactness he wished and a straightforwardness of construction also. Then, probably, when he had said that his sweet voice sung like a silver clarion, he reflected that a clarion rung rather than sung, and changing his word, he saw that in the accents of the tongue he had a more ringing power than he had in a sweet voice, and certainly not only is the measure of the last line now better, but there has been a great access of virility; the mere change of *sung* to *rung* has lifted the third line into something like a trumpet-note.

In the third stanza, the first draft showed only two slight alterations; in the first line he wrote *humble homes*, which he changed to *happy homes*, thus presenting a stronger contrast to the youth's loneliness, and in the second he changed *pure and bright* to *clear and bright*, but the whole stanza was unsatisfactory as it then stood:

In happy homes he saw the light

Of household fires gleam clear and bright,

And far o'erhead the glaciers shone,

His lips breath'd with a stifled groan,

Excelsior!

The labour appears in the second draft, where the first two lines are the same, but the second two are thus worked over:

Above the spectral
~~And far above the~~ glaciers shone;
And from his lips escaped a
~~His lips repress'd the rising~~ groan.

Not only is the rhythm better in this last line, but the action is far more poetic, while both lines have gained in nervous force and in their connection with each other. As first written, there was an awkward halt at the close of the third line. In the final revision one other change was introduced by making the fires gleam *warm and bright* instead of *clear and bright*, which was a weak redundancy, while warm also intensifies the contrast.

The fourth stanza came easily. The first three lines were unchanged in the first draft or the second, and stood as they do in the

printed form. The fourth line in the first draft appeared:

his clarion
And clear ~~that youthful~~ voice replied;

in the second draft, it was

loud
And ~~clear~~ his clarion voice replied;

in the poem it now reads

And loud that clarion voice replied.

Slight changes these, but in the direction of euphony and picturesqueness. It may be said that *youthful* in its contrast to the *old man* was preferable, but it was not so euphonic, and *clarion*, though used before, was probably taken as suggesting, with loudness, the spiritual cry of the young man heard above the physical voice of the tempest and torrent,

There is some uncertainty in deciphering the erasures of the fifth stanza. In the corrections, however, there is no singular variation of form except that in the third line, *pale blue eye* became altered to *bright blue eye;* possibly the poet at first meant to indicate his weariness by *pale*, and then resolved to give rather his resolution in *bright.*

In the sixth stanza *the pine tree's withered branch* is an improvement upon the first form, which appeared in both drafts, *the withered pine*

tree's branch and *awful avalanche* was first the tamer *falling avalanche.*

The seventh stanza was wholly rewritten, and recast. Besides the lineal erasures, lines are drawn downward, marking out the whole, and a new stanza takes its place.

And as the
~~The pious~~ monks of Saint Bernard

In haste the convent gate unbarr'd
They
~~And~~ heard amid the falling snow

More faint that smothered voice of woe,

Excelsior!

This was clearly abrupt in transition and false also to the thought of the poem, for it was no part of the poet's intention to characterise the cry as a smothered voice of woe; so he rewrote it as it now stands, except that in the second draft he wrote *startled air* for *frosty* and *clear cold* successively, a change which added a new and striking effect. The immense improvement in the new stanza is apparent at a glance, since in the turn of the poem the very action of the monks is subtly connected with the aspiration of the youth.

The first two lines of the last stanza but one gave the poet some trouble before he could

find the most fit expression. In the first draft he wrote without erasure —

And guided by the faithful hound,

A frozen, lifeless corse they found;

Still grasping in his hand of ice

The banner with the strange device,

Excelsior!

In the second draft the first two lines appear:

A traveller, by
~~Buried in snow~~ the faithful hound
Half buried in the snow was
~~Far up the pass a traveller~~ found

The form in the first draft was probably chosen before the original seventh stanza was discarded. Certainly the omission of the pious monks in the final discovery is a gain; the loneliness of the youth is intensified when he is discovered not by one of his own race, but by a hound. Once more, as in the beginning, there, is as it were, a resolution into nature, and the youth, the snow and ice, and a dumb creature remain.

The first two lines of the last stanza stand in print as they were first written, but the last two lines show the poet's fatigue at the close of

his work. He had his idea perfected, but his mind stumbled over the right words. Thus the first draft is as follows:

~~And~~
~~His lips had caught the clear of day~~
serene
And from the ~~deep~~ sky, ~~faint~~ and far
fell
A voice ~~dropped~~ like a falling star,

Excelsior!

He did not know it then, but he had really finished his poem, for when he came later to write his second draft, he made his correction over again:

serene
And from the ~~deep~~ sky, ~~faint~~ and far

At the bottom of the first draft are the words, "September 28, 1841. Half-past three o'clock, morning. Now to bed." He wrote first September 27, and then remembered that he had reached the next day and changed the 7 to 8. If any one is curious to know the day of the week, it was Monday night that the poet sat up to write this poem. Sumner's letter to him is dated merely Thursday, so one can imagine that he had answered it and now had it lying by him as waste paper.

The study of the growth of a poem is an

interesting and curious business, yet after all how little one really sees of the poet at work. Somehow or other, as Lowell says regarding Hawthorne, apropos of his note-books, you look through the key-hole and think you will catch the secret of the alchemist, but at the critical moment his back is turned toward you. It is rare, however, that one has so good an opportunity as this of seeing the shaping of a poetic idea.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

[The best edition of Poe's works, edited by Clarence E. Stedman and George E. Woodberry, is published in ten volumes by Duffield & Co. New York.

In the "American Men of Letters" series published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, is Edgar Allan Poe, by George E. Woodberry, himself an eminent poet and critic. From his judgment of Poe is taken:

"On the roll of our literature Poe's name is inscribed with the few foremost, and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men. Much as he derived nurture from other sources he was the son of Coleridge by the weird touch in his imagination, by the principles of his analytical criticism, and the speculative bent of his mind. An artist primarily, whose skill, helped by the finest sensitive and perceptive powers in himself, was developed by thought, patience, and endless self-correction into a subtle deftness of hand unsurpassed in its own work, he belonged to the men of culture instead of those of originally perfect power; but being gifted with the dreaming instinct, the myth-making faculty, the allegorizing power, and with no other poetic element of high genius, he exercised his art in a region of vague feeling, symbolic ideas, and fantastic imagery, and wrought his spell largely through sensuous effects of colour, sound, and gloom, heightened by lurking but unshaped suggestion of mysterious meanings. Now and then gleams of light and scratches of lovely landscape shine out, but for the most part his mastery was over dismal, superstitious, and waste places."]

Youthful Aspirations

FROM A LETTER QUOTED IN THE "YANKEE AND BOSTON LITERARY GAZETTE," DECEMBER, 1829

I AM young — not yet twenty — *am* a poet — if deep worship of all beauty can make me

one — and wish to be so in the more common meaning of the word. I would give the world to embody one-half the ideas afloat in my imagination. (By the way, do you remember — or did you ever read the exclamation of Shelley about Shakespeare? — "What a number of ideas must have been afloat before such an author could arise!") I appeal to you as a man that loves the same beauty that I adore — the beauty of the natural blue sky and the sunshiny earth — there can be no tie more strong than that of brother for brother — it is not so much that they love one another, as that they both love the same parent — their affections are always running in the same direction — the same channel — and cannot help mingling.

I am, and have been from my childhood, an idler. It cannot therefore be said that

> I left a calling for this idle trade,
> A duty broke, a father disobeyed —

for I have no father nor mother.

I am, about to publish a volume of poems, the greater part written before I was fifteen. Speaking about heaven, the editor of the *Yankee* says, "He might write a beautiful, if not a magnificent poem" (the very first words of encouragement I ever remember to have heard). I am very certain that as yet I have not written *either* — but that I *can*, I will take oath, if they will give me time.

The poems to be published are "Al Aaraaf" and "Tamerlane," one about four, the other about three hundred lines. "Al Aaraaf" has some good poetry, and much extravagance which I have not had time to throw away.

What Poetry Is

[from a letter to mr. b——]

West Point, ——, 1831.

A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object, pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having, for its object, an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music, without the idea, is simply music; the idea, without the music, is prose, from its very definiteness.

On His Tales

[to philip p. cooke]

New York, August 9, 1846.

Never think of excusing yourself (to me) for dilatoriness in answering letters — I know too well the unconquerable procrastination which besets the poet. I will place it all to the

accounts of the turkeys. Were I to be seized by a rambling fit, one of my customary *passions* (nothing less) for vagabondising through the woods for a week or a month together, I would not—in fact I *could* not—be put out of my mood, were it even to answer a letter from the Grand Mogul informing me that I had fallen heir to his possessions.

Thank you for the compliments. Were I in a serious humour just now, I would tell you frankly how your words of appreciation make my nerves thrill — not because you praise me (for others have praised me more lavishly) but because I feel that you comprehend and discriminate. You are right about the hair-splitting of my French friend — that is all done for effect. These tales of ratiocination owe most of their popularity to being something in a new key — I do not mean to say that they are not ingenious — but people think them more ingenious than they are — on account of their method, and *air* of method. In the "Murders in the Rue Morgue," for instance, where is the ingenuity of unraveling a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the express purpose of unraveling? The reader is made to confound the ingenuity of the supposititious Dupin with that of the writer of the story.

Not for the world would I have had any one else to continue Lowell's memoir until I had heard from you. I wish *you* to do it (if you will be so kind) and nobody else. By the time the

book appears you will be famous (or all my prophecy goes for nothing), and I shall have the *éclat* of your name to aid my sales. But seriously I do not think that any one so well enters into the poetical portion of my mind as yourself — and I deduce this idea from my intense appreciation of those points of your own poetry which seem lost upon others.

Should you undertake the work for me, there is one topic — there is one particular in which I have had wrong done me, and it may not be indecorous in me to call your attention to it. The last selection of my Tales was made from about seventy, Wiley and Putnam's reader, Duyckinck. He has what he thinks a taste for ratiocination, and has accordingly made up the book mostly of analytic stories. But this is not *representing* my mind in its various phases — it is not giving me fair play. In writing these Tales one by one, at long intervals, I have kept the book-unity always in mind — that is, each has been composed with reference to its effect as part of *a whole*. In this view, one of my chief aims has been the widest diversity of subject, thought, and especially *tone* and manner of handling. Were all my tales now before me in a large volume, and as the composition of another, the merit which would principally arrest my attention would be the wide *diversity and variety*. You will be surprised to hear me say that (omitting one or two of my first efforts) I do not consider any one of my

stories *better* than another. There is a vast variety of kinds, and, in degree of value, the kinds vary — but each tale is equally good *of its kind*. The loftiest kind is that of the highest imagination — and for this reason only "Ligeia" may be called my *best* tale. I have much improved this last since you saw it, and I mail you a copy, as well as a copy of my best specimen of analysis — "The Philosophy of Composition." . . .

Poetry a Passion, Not a Study

[*Southern Literary Messenger*, July, 1836]

. . . Against the subtleties which would make poetry a study — not a passion — it becomes the metaphysician to reason — but the poet to protest Yet Wordsworth and Coleridge are men in years; the one embued in contemplation from his childhood, the other a giant in intellect and in learning. The diffidence, then, with which I venture to dispute their authority, would be overwhelming did I not feel, from the bottom of my heart, that learning has little to do with the imagination — intellect with the passions — or age with poetry. . . .

"Trifles, like straws, upon the surface flow,
He who would search for pearls must dive below,"

are lines which have done much mischief. As regards the greater truths, men oftener err by

seeking them at the bottom than at the top; the depth lies in the huge abysses where wisdom is sought — not in the palpable places where she is found. The ancients were not always right in hiding the goddess in a well; witness the light which Bacon has thrown upon philosophy; witness the principles of our divine faith — that moral mechanism by which the simplicity of a child may overbalance the wisdom of a man. . . .

Writing Evokes Thought

Some Frenchman, possibly Montaigne, says: "People talk about thinking, but for my part I never think, except when I sit down to write." It is this never thinking, unless we sit down to write, which is the cause of so much indifferent composition. But perhaps there is something more involved in the Frenchman's observations than meets the eye. It is certain that the mere act of inditing tends, in a great degree, to the logicalisation of thought. Whenever, on account of its vagueness, I am dissatisfied with a conception of the brain, I resort forthwith to the pen, for the purpose of obtaining, through its aid, the necessary form, consequence, and precision.

How very commonly we hear it remarked, that such and such thoughts are beyond the compass of words! I do not believe that any thought, properly so called, is out of the reach of language. I fancy, rather, that where

difficulty in expression is experienced, there is, in the intellect which experiences it, a want either of deliberateness or of method. For my own part, I have never had a thought which I could not set down in words, with even more distinctness than that with which I conceived it.

There is, however, a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy, which are not thoughts, and to which, *as yet*, I have found it absolutely impossible to adapt language. I use the word *fancies* at random, and merely because I must use *some* word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows in question. They seem rather psychal than intellectual. They arise in the soul (alas, how rarely!) only at its epochs of most intense tranquillity — when the bodily and mental health are in perfection — and at those mere points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with the world of dreams. I am aware of the "fancies" only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so. I have satisfied myself that this condition exists but for an inappreciable point of time — yet it is crowded with those "shadows of shadows"; and for absolute *thought* there is demanded time's *endurance*.

How Poe Revised "The Raven"

Poe's Works, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and George E. Woodberry, are pub-

lished in ten volumes by Duffield & Co., New York. The tenth volume gives the poems, with their successive revisions in detail, showing that Poe was tireless in the refinement of his work. How "The Raven" gradually assumed its final form is thus traced:

Originally the poem appeared in the *Evening Mirror*, January 29, 1845; then in the *American Whig Review*, February, 1845; next in the *Broadway Journal*, 1845, here referred to by their initials.

Readings which vary from the text as finally revised:

Stanza II., line 3. Sought || tried.—A. W. R; B. J.

Stanza V., line 3. Stillness || darkness. — A. W. R; B. J.

Stanza VI., line 1. Back || Then. — A. W. R; B. J.

Stanza VI., line 2. Again I heard || I heard again; something || somewhat. — A. W. R; B. J.

Stanza VII., line 3. Minute || instant. — A. W. R; B. J. Moment "Poe's Philosophy of Composition."

Stanza IX., line 3. Living human || sublunary. — A. W. R.

Stanza X., line 1. That || the.— A.W. R.; B. J.

Stanza X., line 6. Then the bird said || Quoth the raven. — A. W. R.

Stanza XI, line 1. Startled || wondering. — A. W. R.

Stanza XI., line 4–6. Till . . . nevermore ||

so when Hope he would adjure. Stern Despair returned, instead of the sweet Hope he dared adjure. That sad answer "Nevermore." — A. W. R.

Stanza XI., line 5. That || the. — B. J.

Stanza XI., line 6. Of "Nevermore'" — of "Nevermore." — B. J.

Stanza XIV., line 2. Seraphim whose || angels whose faint. — A. W. R., B. J.

Stanza XIV., line 5. Quaff, oh || Let me. — A. W. R.

Stanza XVIII., line 3, Demon's || demon. — A. W. R; B. J.

Suggestions for "The Princess"

[Mr. Samuel E. Dawson, in his "Study of 'The Princess' " published by Dawson Brothers, Montreal, 1884, gives this letter from Tennyson. It affords a unique glimpse of the poet's methods of composition. — Ed.]

Aldworth, Haslemere, Surrey,

November 21, 1882

I thank you for your able and thoughtful essay on "The Princess." You have seen, amongst other things, that if women were ever to play such freaks, the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand. . . . Your explanatory notes are very much to the purpose, and I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always recur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine, almost word for word. Why not? Are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions? It is scarcely possible for any one to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which in the rest of the literature of the world a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was

suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur; and more, I wholly disagree. There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, etc., in order to work from them into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain: for example:

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.

Suggestion

The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, though now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon was behind it.

A great black cloud
Dragged inward from the deep.

Suggestion

A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon.

In the "Idylls of the King."

with all
Its stormy crest that smote against the skies

Suggestion

A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

"As the water-lily starts and slides."

Suggestion

Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks, quite as true as Wordsworth's simile and more in detail.

A wild wind shook —
Follow, follow, thou shall win

Suggestion

I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and —

Shake the songs, the whispers and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

The wind I believe was a west wind, but because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and naturally the wind said "follow." I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me though of course, if they occur in the "Prometheus," I must have read them. I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you, and far indeed am I from asserting that books as well as nature are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great

masters as Virgil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a bygone poet, and reclothe it more or less, according to their own fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet and so believe that *he*, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say "Ring the bells," without finding that we had taken it from Sir P. Sidney, or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean "roars," without finding the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarised it (fact!).

I have known an old fish-wife, who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day, and cry out, "Ay, roar! do! How I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!" Now if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I daresay the critics would have thought it original enough, but would most likely have advised me to go to nature for my old women and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

Here is another anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes

down one thousand or twelve hundred feet I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words:

Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.

When I printed this, a critic informed me that "lawn" was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall, and graciously added, "Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre but to nature herself for his suggestions." And I *had* gone to nature herself.

I think it is a moot point whether, if I had known how that effect is produced on the stage, I should have ventured to publish the line.

I find that I have written, quite contrary to my custom, a letter, when I had merely intended to thank you for your interesting commentary.

Thanking you again for it, I beg you to believe me, very faithfully yours,

A. Tennyson.

ROBERT BURNS

[Thomas Carlyle in his essay on Burns has said:

"The excellence of Burns is among the rarest whether in poetry or prose, but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised: his sincerity, his indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities; no wire-drawn refinings, either in thought or feeling: the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and has been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience; it is the scenes he has lived and laboured amidst that he describes. Those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts and definite resolves; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it, too, with such melody and modulation as he can; "in homely rustic jingle," but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them, let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. To every poet, to every writer, we might say, Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition, of his own heart; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him."]

An Autobiographical Sketch

[TO DR. MOORE]

MAUCHLINE, August 2, 1787.

For some months past I have been rambling over the country, but I am now confined with

some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of ennui, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this country; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be, often at my own expense; for I assure you, sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, excepting in the trifling affair of wisdom, I sometimes think I resemble — I have, I say, like him turned my eyes to behold madness and folly, and like him, too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood.

Gules, purpure, argent, etc., quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understood men, their manners and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farmhouse; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

AS A BOY

At those years, I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiotic

piety. I say idiotic piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar: and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owe much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp lookout in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors.

EARLY READING

The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was "The Vision of Mirza," and a hymn of Addison's beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear —

> For though on dreadful whirls we hung
> High on the broken wave —

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my schoolbooks. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were "The Life of Hannibal," and "The History of Sir William Wallace." Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, etc., used a few years afterward to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was like our catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connections with other younkers, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age,

that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged playfellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were, perhaps, born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart, I am sure, not even the "Munny Begum" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died, the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "Twa Dogs." My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very

poorly; I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might, perhaps, have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

BEGINS RHYMING

This kind of life — the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom: she was a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie (engaging) lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, etc., but I never expressly

said I loved her. Indeed I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heartstrings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry, which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest, enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracti-

cable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail, by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!

A DILIGENT READER

It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish — no hermit was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the Spectator. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The "Pantheon," Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," Stackhouse's "History of the Bible," Justice's "British Gardener's Directory," Boyle's "Lectures," Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's "Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin," "A Select Collection of English Songs," and Hervey's "Meditations," had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my companion, day and night. I pored over them,

driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

POVERTY AT HOME

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me he took a sort of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterward within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of fortune were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first

is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it; the last I always hated — there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was a leaning toward the adorable half of humankind. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared further for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart.

NEW EXPERIENCES

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was,

that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc. in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life.

My reading meantime was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works. I had seen human nature in a new phase; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that, though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of the day-book and ledger.

BEGINS HIS SONGS

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. The addition of two

more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie — "Tristram Shandy" and the "Man of Feeling" — were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except, "Winter, a Dirge," the eldest of my printed pieces; "The Death of Poor Maillie," "John Barleycorn," and Songs First, Second and Third. Song Second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year, was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine), to learn the trade. This was an unlucky affair. As we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire and burned to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme, the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he

was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a beautiful girl, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus — depart from me, ye cursed!

From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this time master of a large West Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I

loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. . . . My reading only increased while in this town by two stray volumes of "Pamela," and one of "Ferdinand Count Fathom," which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hare-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

FARMING AND POETRY

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, "come, go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short, in spite of the devil, and the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from a late harvest,

we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them figuring in my "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only

nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica.

PUBLISHES HIS POEMS

But before leaving my native country forever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears — a poor Negro driver — or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say that, poor and unknown as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves. To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others. I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation — where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West

Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

Hungry ruin had me in the wind.

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia — "The Gloomy Night Is Gathering Fast," when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction.

The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie* [Forget me, Great God, if I ever forget him!]

I need relate no further. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch" the characters and "the manners living as they rise." Whether I have profited, time will show.

A Poet to Excel Must Labour

TO DR. MOORE

Ellisland, 4th January, 1789.

. . . The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my late *eclat* was owing to the singularity of my situation, and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul"; but I as firmly believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least I am resolved to try

my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive — but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know) whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses in a good measure, the power of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend — not only of abilities to judge, but with good nature enough like a prudent teacher with a young learner to praise a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all diseases —heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? . . .

Sources of Inspiration

[to mrs. dunlop]

Ellisland, New Year Day Morning, 1789.

This, dear madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the Apostle James's description!— "the prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In that case,

madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day — the first Sunday of May — a breezy, blue-skied noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn — these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them that one should be particularly pleased with

this thing, or struck with that, which on minds of a different cast makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities — a God that made all things — man's immaterial and immortal nature — and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave! R. B.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

[In his "Choice of Books," published by the Macmillan Company, New York, Frederic Harrison, says:

"Scott is a perfect library in himself. A constant reader of romances would find that it needed months to go through even the best pieces of the inexhaustible painter of eight full centuries and every type of man; and he might repeat the process of reading him ten times in a life-time without a sense of fatigue or sameness. The poetic beauty of Scott's creations is almost the least of his great qualities. It is the universality of his sympathy that is so truly great, the justice of his estimates, the insight into the spirit of each age, his intense absorption of self in the vast epic of human civilisation. What are the old almanacs they so often give us as histories beside these living pictures of the ordered succession of ages? . . . He loves the councils of chiefs and the palace of the king; but the swine-herd, the charioteer, the slave-girl, the hound, the beggar, and the herdsman, all glow alike in the harmonious colouring of his peopled epic. We see the dawn of our English nation, the defence of Christendom against the Koran, the grace and the terror of feudalism, the rise of monarchy out of baronies, the rise of parliaments out of monarchy, the rise of industry out of serfage, the pathetic ruin of chivalry, the splendid death-struggle of Catholicism, the sylvan tribes of the mountains (remnants of our prehistoric forefathers) beating themselves to pieces against the hard advance of modern industry; we see the grim heroism of the Bible martyrs, the catastrophe of feudalism, overwhelmed by a practical age which knew little of its graces, and almost nothing of its virtues. Such is Scott, who, we may say, has done for the various phases of modern history, what Shakespeare has done for the manifold types of human character."

Lockhart's "Life of Scott" is esteemed second only to Boswell's Johnson among biographies. It depicts a great man as well as a great romancer. Its closing chapters tell

a story as pathetic as was ever penned by the Wizard himself. Scott was involved in the failure of the Ballantines, his publishers: in the honourable endeavour to pay off his debts, he undoubtedly hastened his death. Lockhart's Life and Scott's own Journal afford the autobiographical pages here given.]

Debt to Literary Societies

It is well known that in Edinburgh one great spur to emulation among youthful students is in those associations called literary societies, formed not only for the purpose of debate, but of composition. These undoubtedly have some disadvantages where a bold, petulant, and disputatious temper happens to be combined with considerable information and talent. Still, however, in order to such a person being actually spoiled by his mixing in such debates, his talents must be of a very rare nature, or his effrontery must be proof to every species of assault; for there is generally, in a well-selected society of this nature, talent sufficient to meet the forwardest, and satire enough to penetrate the most undaunted. I am particularly obliged to this sort of club for introducing me, about my seventeenth year, into society which at one time I had entirely dropped; for, from the time of my illness at college, I had had little or no intercourse with any of my class-companions, one or two only excepted. Now, however, about 1788, I began to feel and take my ground in society. A ready wit, a good deal of enthusiasm, and a perception that soon ripened into tact

and observation of character, rendered me an acceptable companion to many young men, whose acquisitions in philosophy and science were infinitely superior to anything I could boast.

A Backward Glance at His Youth

Looking back on these times, I cannot applaud in all respects the way in which our days were spent. There was too much idleness, and sometimes too much conviviality; but our hearts were warm, our minds honourably bent on knowledge and literary distinction; and if I, certainly the least informed of the party, may be permitted to bear witness, we were not without the fair and creditable means of attaining the distinction to which we aspired. In this society I was naturally led to correct my former useless course of reading; for — feeling myself greatly inferior to my companions in metaphysical philosophy and other branches of regular study — I laboured, not without some success, to acquire at least such a portion of knowledge as might enable me to maintain my rank in conversation. In this I succeeded pretty well; but unfortunately then, as often since through my life, I incurred the deserved ridicule of my friends from the superficial nature of my acquisitions, which being, in the mercantile phrase, got up for society, very often proved flimsy in the texture; and thus the gifts of an uncommonly retentive memory and acute powers of perception were sometimes detri-

mental to their possessor, by encouraging him to a presumptuous reliance upon them.

Learned Something from Everybody

December 27, 1825.—Worked at Pepys in the evening, with the purpose of review for Lockhart. Notwithstanding the depressing effects of the calomel, I feel the pleasure of being alone and uninterrupted. Few men, leading a quiet life, and without any strong or highly varied change of circumstances, have seen more variety of society than I — few have enjoyed it more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification; and were I obliged to account for hints afforded on such occasions, I should make an ample deduction from my inventive powers. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to waiting for visitors, and have often taken a bannock and a bit of cheese to the wood or hill, to avoid dining with company. As I grew from boyhood to manhood I saw this would not do: and that to gain a place in men's esteem I must mix and bustle with them. Pride and an excitation of spirits supplied the real pleasure which others seem to feel in society, and certainly upon many occasions it was real. Still, if the question was, eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or solitary confinement for life.

I should say, "Turnkey, lock the cell!" My life, though not without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future prospect by prospects more fair than can ever be realised. Somewhere it is said that this castle-building — this wielding of the aërial trowel — is fatal to exertions in actual life. I cannot tell; I have not found it so. I cannot, indeed, say like Madame Genlis, that in the imaginary scenes in which I have acted a part I ever prepared myself for anything which actually befell me; but I have certainly fashioned out much that made the present hour pass pleasantly away, and much that has enabled me to contribute to the amusement of the public. Since I was five years old I cannot remember the time when I had not some ideal part to play for my own solitary amusement.

Fidelity in Observation

[During the summer of 1812 Walter Scott paid a visit to Mr. John B. S. Morritt at Rokeby, visiting the castles of Bowes, Brough, Appleby, and Brougham. In Lockhart's "Life of Scott," Mr. Morritt is quoted:]

"I had, of course, had many previous opportunities of testing the almost conscientious

fidelity of his local descriptions; but I could not help being singularly struck with the lights which this visit threw on that characteristic of his compositions. The morning after he arrived he said, 'You have often given me materials for a romance — now I want a good robber's cave and an old church of the right sort.' We rode out, and he found what he wanted in the ancient slate-quarries of Brignal, and the ruined abbey of Eggleston; I observed him noting down even the peculiar little wild flowers and herbs that accidentally grew round and on the side of a bold crag near his intended cave of Guy Denzil; and could not help saying, that as he was not to be upon oath in his work, daisies, violets, and primroses would be as poetical as any of the humble plants he was examining. I laughed, in short, at his scrupulousness; but I understood him when he replied, 'that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes, would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded, whereas, whoever trusted to imagination, would soon find his own mind circumscribed, and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would, sooner or later, produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth. Besides which,' he said,

'local names and peculiarities make a fictitious story look so much better in the face.' In fact, from his boyish habits. he was but half satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect it with same local legend, and when I was forced sometimes to confess with the knife-grinder, 'Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir' — he would laugh and say, 'then let us make one — nothing so easy as to make a tradition.'"

Wrote Best Early in the Morning

Edinburgh, February 10, 1826 — The half hour between waking and rising has all my life proved propitious to any task which was exercising my invention. When I get over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times to fill up a passage in a poem, it was always when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself, when I am at a loss, "Never mind, we shall have it at seven o'clock to-morrow morning." If I have forgot a circumstance, or a name, or a copy of verses, it is the same thing. I think the first hour of the morning is also favourable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the horn, or projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them around. But I could only do this before

breakfast, and shortly after rising. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try it will find the feat no easy one. This morning I had some good ideas respecting "Woodstock," which will make the story better. The devil of a difficulty is, that one puzzles the skein in order to excite curiosity, and then cannot disentangle it for the satisfaction of the prying fiend they have raised.

[How Scott employed his materials in the construction of a romance is told in his introduction to the "Fortunes of Nigel."]

Moods in Composition

June 4, 1826 — I wrote a good task yesterday, and to-day a great one, scarce stirring from the desk the whole day, except a few minutes when Lady Rae called. I was glad to see my wife's old friend, with whom in early life we had so many pleasant meetings. I am not sure it is right to work so hard; but a man must take himself, as well as other people, when he is in the humour. A man will do twice as much at one time and in half the time, and twice as well as he will be able to do at another. People are always crying out about method, and in some respects it is good, and shows to great advantage among men of business, but I doubt if men of method, who can lay aside or take up the pen just at the hour appointed, will ever be better than poor creatures. Lady L[ouise] S[tuart]

used to tell me of Mr. Hoole, the translator of "Tasso" and "Ariosto," and in that capacity a noble transmuter of gold into lead, that he was a clerk in the India House, with long ruffles and a snuff-coloured suit of clothes, who occasionally visited her father [John, Earl of Bute]. She sometimes conversed with him, and was amused to find that he did exactly so many couplets day by day, neither more or less; and habit had made it light to him, however heavy it might seem to the reader.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

[Hawthorne is the one supreme romancer that America has given to the world. Himself of Puritan blood he depicted with weird power and profound insight the conflict between Puritan passion and Puritan conscience. Underlying his faculty as a writer was strong common sense — matured in the school of adversity. Had fortune permitted, he would have been a recluse to the end of his days. Poverty obliged him to earn his bread in the Custom Houses of Boston and Salem, in the American Consulate at Liverpool. This compulsory taking part in every-day life did him good. It enlarged his knowledge of human nature: it gave a foil to the sombre broodings of his imagination.

In 1876 his son-in-law, the late George P. Lathrop, wrote "A Study of Hawthorne," which has furnished two letters here transcribed. "Hawthorne and his Wife," by Julian Hawthorne, their son, has provided the other letters here presented, thanks to the courtesy of the publishers, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

Some charming pages of autobiography, flecked here and there with an inevitable touch of romance, are given by Hawthorne in his prefaces to "Twice-told Tales," and "Mosses from an Old Manse." The introductory chapter of "The Scarlet Letter" describes the Salem Custom House in a vein of unwonted humour. This by-play but heightens the effect of a tragedy unfolded with a skill nothing less than magical. — ED.]

[In 1853 Hawthorne gave Richard H. Stoddard a brief autobiographical sketch for the *National Review:*]

As a Boy

I was born in the town of Salem, Massachusetts [July 4, 1804] in a house built by my grandfather, who was a maritime personage.

The old household estate was in another part of the town, and had descended in the family ever since the settlement of the country; but this old man of the sea exchanged it for a lot of land situated near the wharves, and convenient to his business, where he built the house (which is still standing), and laid out a garden, where I rolled on a grass-plot under an apple-tree and picked abundant currants. This grandfather (about whom there is a ballad in Griswold's "Curiosities of American Literature") died long before I was born. One of the peculiarities of my boyhood was a grievous disinclination to go to school, and (Providence favouring me in this natural repugnance) I never did go half as much as other boys, partly owing to delicate health (which I made the most of for the purpose), and partly because, much of the time, there were no schools within reach.

When I was eight or nine years old, my mother, with her three children, took up her residence on the banks of the Sebago Lake, in Maine, where the family owned a large tract of land; and here I ran quite wild, and would, I doubt not, have willingly run wild till this time, fishing all day long, or shooting with an old fowling-piece; but reading a good deal, too, on the rainy days, especially in Shakspeare and "The Pilgrim's Progress," and any poetry or light books within my reach. Those were delightful days; for that part of the country was wild then, with only scattered clearings, and

nine-tenths of it primæval woods. But by and by my good mother began to think it was necessary for her boy to do something else; so I was sent back to Salem, where a private instructor fitted me for college. I was educated (as the phrase is) at Bowdoin College. I was an idle student, negligent of college rules and the Procrustean details of academic life, rather choosing to nurse my own fancies than to dig into Greek roots and be numbered among the learned Thebans.

A Literary Recluse

It was my fortune or misfortune, just as you please, to have some slender means of supporting myself; and so, on leaving college, in 1825, instead of immediately studying a profession, I sat myself down to consider what pursuit in life I was best fit for. My mother had now returned, and taken up her abode in her deceased father's house, a tall, ugly, old, grayish building (it is now the residence of half a dozen Irish families), in which I had a room. And year after year I kept on considering what I was fit for, and time and my destiny decided that I was to be the writer that I am. I had always a natural tendency (it appears to have been on the paternal side) toward seclusion; and this I now indulged to the utmost, so, that, for months together, I scarcely held human intercourse outside of my own family; seldom going out except at twilight, or only to take the nearest way to the most convenient solitude.

which was oftenest the seashore — the rocks and beaches in that vicinity being as fine as any in New England. Once a year, or thereabouts, I used to make an excursion of a few weeks, in which I enjoyed as much of life as other people do in the whole year's round. Having spent so much of my boyhood and youth away from my native place, I had very few acquaintances in Salem, and during the nine or ten years that I spent there, in this solitary way, I doubt whether so much as twenty people in the town were aware of my existence.

Meanwhile, strange as it may seem, I had lived a very tolerable life, always seemed cheerful, and enjoyed the very best bodily health. I had read endlessly all sorts of good and good-for-nothing books, and, in the dearth of other employment, had early begun to scribble sketches and stories, most of which I burned. Some, however, got into the magazines and annuals; but, being anonymous or under different signatures, they did not soon have the effect of concentrating any attention upon the author. Still, they did bring me into contact with certain individuals. Mr. S. C. Goodrich (a gentleman of many excellent qualities, although a publisher) took a very kindly interest in me, and employed my pen for "The Token," an annual. Old copies of "The Token" may still be found in antique boudoirs and on the dusty shelves of street bookstalls. It was the first and probably the best — it could not possibly be the worst

— annual ever issued in this country. It was a sort of hot-house, where native flowers were made to bloom like exotics.

"Twice-Told Tales"

From the press of Munroe & Co., Boston, in the year 1837, appeared "Twice-Told Tales." Though not widely successful in their day and generation, they had the effect of making me known in my own immediate vicinity; insomuch that, however reluctantly, I was compelled to come out of my owl's nest and lionise in a small way. Thus I was gradually drawn somewhat into the world, and became pretty much like other people. My long seclusion had not made me melancholy or misanthropic, nor wholly unfitted me for the bustle of life; and perhaps it was the kind of discipline which my idiosyncrasy demanded, and chance and my own instincts, operating together, had caused me to do what was fittest.

Concerning College and a Career

[to his mother]

Salem, March 13, 1821.

. . . I don't read as much now as I did because I am more taken up in studying. I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend my vacations with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have. The being a

minister is of course out of the question. I should not think that even you could desire me to choose so dull a way of life. Oh no, mother, I was not born to vegetate forever in one place, and to live and die as tranquil as — a puddle of water. As to lawyers, there are so many of them already that one half of them (upon a moderate calculation) are in a state of actual starvation. A physician, then, seems to be "Hobson's choice"; but yet I should not like to live by the diseases and infirmities of my fellow-creatures. And it would weigh very hardly on my conscience, in the course of my practice, if I should chance to send any unlucky patient *ad inferum*, which, being interpreted, is "to the realms below." Oh that I was rich enough to live without any profession! What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed, I think the illegibility of my hand is very author-like. How proud you would be to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull. But authors are always poor devils, and therefore Satan may take them.

Not at One with New England Practicalities

[In his "Sunday at Home," one of the "Twice-Told Tales," is this portrait of Hawthorne by himself:]

I was a youth of gay and happy temperament, with an incorrigible levity of spirit, of no vicious

propensities, sensible enough, but wayward and fanciful. What a character was this to be brought into contact with the old Pilgrim spirit of my guardian! We were at variance on a thousand points; but our chief and final dispute arose from the pertinacity with which he insisted on my adopting a particular profession: while I, being heir to a moderate competence, had avowed my purpose of keeping aloof from the regular business of life. This would have been a dangerous resolution anywhere in the world; it was fatal in New England. There is a grossness in the conceptions of my countrymen; they will not be convinced that any good thing may consist with what they call idleness; they can anticipate nothing but evil of a young man who neither studies physic, law, nor gospel, nor opens a store, nor takes to farming, but manifests an incomprehensible disposition to be satisfied with what his father left him. The principle is excellent in its general influence, but most miserable in its effect on the few who violate it. I had a quick sensitiveness to public opinion, and felt as if it ranked me with the tavern haunters and town-paupers — with the drunken poet who hawked his own Fourth of July Odes, and the broken soldier who had been good for nothing since last war. The consequence of all this was a piece of light-hearted desperation. I do not overestimate my notoriety when I take it for granted that many of my readers must have heard of me in

the wild way of life which I adopted. The idea of becoming a wandering story teller had been suggested a year or two before, by an encounter with several merry vagabonds in a showman's wagon, where they and I had sheltered ourselves during a summer shower.

A Retrospect at Thirty-three

[to henry wadsworth longfellow, a college mate at bowdoin]

June 2, 1837.

. . . It gratifies me that you have occasionally felt an interest in my situation; but your quotation from Jean Paul about the 'lark's nest' makes me smile. You would have been much nearer the truth if you had pictured me as dwelling in an owl's nest; for mine is about as dismal, and, like the owl, I seldom venture abroad till after dusk. By some witchcraft or other — for I really cannot assign any reasonable why and wherefore — I have been carried apart from the main current of life, and find it impossible to get back again. Since we last met, which you remember was in Sawtell's room, where you read a farewell poem to the relics of the class — ever since that time I have secluded myself from society; and yet I never meant any such thing, nor dreamed what sort of life I was going to lead. I have made a captive of myself, and put me into a dungeon,

and now I cannot find the key to let myself out — and if the door were open, I should be almost afraid to come out. You tell me that you have met with troubles and changes. I know not what these may have been, but I can assure you that trouble is the next best thing to enjoyment, and that there is no fate in this world so horrible as to have no share in its joys or sorrows. For the last ten years I have not lived, but only dreamed of living. It may be true that there have been some unsubstantial pleasures, here in the shade, which I might have missed in the sunshine, but you cannot conceive how utterly devoid of satisfaction all my retrospects are. I have laid up no treasure of pleasant remembrances against old age; but there is some comfort in thinking that future years can hardly fail to be more varied, and therefore more tolerable than the past.

You give me more credit than I deserve, in supposing that I have led a studious life. I have indeed turned over a good many books, but in so desultory a way that it cannot be called study nor has it left me the fruits of study. As to my literary efforts, I do not think much of them, nor is it worth while to be ashamed of them. They would have been better, I trust, if written under more favourable circumstances. I have had no external excitement, — no consciousness that the public would like what I wrote, nor much hope nor a passionate desire that they should do so. Nevertheless, having noth-

ing else to be ambitious of, I have been considerably interested in literature; and if my writings had made any decided impression, I should have been stimulated to greater exertions; but there has been no warmth of approbation, so that I have always written with benumbed fingers. I have another great difficulty in the lack of material; for I have seen so little of the world that I have nothing but thin air to concoct my stories of, and it is not easy to give a life-like semblance to such shadowy stuff. Sometimes through a peep-hole I have caught a glimpse of the real world, and the two or three articles in which I have portrayed these glimpses please me better than the others. . . .

At Brook Farm

[Hawthorne joined the famous Brook Farm Community, at Roxbury, now incorporated with Boston. His experience there became the groundwork of chapters in "The Blithedale Romance." On May 3, 1841, he writes to his sister Louisa:]

Mr. Ripley summoned us into the cow-yard, and introduced me to an instrument with four prongs, commonly entitled a dung-fork. With this tool I have already assisted to load twenty or thirty carts of manure, and shall take part in loading three hundred more. Besides, I have planted potatoes and pease, cut straw and hay for the cattle, and done various other mighty works. This very morning I milked

three cows, and I milk two or three every night and morning. The weather has been so unfavourable that we have worked comparatively little in the fields; but, nevertheless, I have gained strength wonderfully — grown quite a giant, in fact — and can do a day's work without the slightest inconvenience. In short, I am transformed into a complete farmer.

This is one of the most beautiful places I ever saw in my life, and as secluded as if it were a hundred miles from any city or village. There are woods, in which we can ramble all day without meeting anybody or scarcely seeing a house. Our house stands apart from the main road, so that we are not troubled even with passengers looking at us. Once in a while we have a transcendental visitor, such as Mr. Alcott, but generally we pass whole days without seeing a single face save those of the brethren. The whole fraternity eat together; and such delectable way of life has never been seen on earth since the days of the early Christians.

The thin frock which you made for me is considered a most splendid article, and I should not wonder if it were to become the summer uniform of the community. I have a thick frock likewise; but it is rather deficient in grace though extremely warm and comfortable. I wear a tremendous pair of cow-hide boots, with soles two inches thick —

of course, when I come to see you I shall wear my farmer's dress.

NATH. HAWTHORNE, *Ploughman.*

SYMPATHY BENEATH HIS RESERVE

[In a Note-book, April 8, 1843.]

A cloudy veil stretches over the abyss of my nature. I have, however, no love of secrecy and darkness. I am glad to think that God sees through my heart, and, if any angel has power to penetrate into it, he is welcome to know everything that is there. Yes, and so may any mortal who is capable of full sympathy, and therefore worthy to come into my depths. But he must find his own way there, I can neither guide nor enlighten him. It is this involuntary reserve, I suppose, that has given the objectivity to my writings; and when people think that I am pouring out myself in a tale or an essay, I am merely telling what is common to human nature, not what is peculiar to myself. I sympathise with them, not they with me.

A GIFT CONSIDERED AS A LOAN

[In 1849 the political enemies of Hawthorne caused him to lose his post as Surveyor at the Salem Custom House. His friends came to his aid with a handsome subscription, accompanied by this note from George S. Hillard.]

BOSTON, January 17, 1850.

It occurred to me, and some other of your friends that, in consideration of the events of the last year, you might at this time be in need of a little pecuniary aid. I have therefore

collected, from some of those who admire your genius and respect your character, the enclosed sum of money, which I send you with my warmest wishes for your health and happiness. I know the sensitive edge of your temperament; but do not speak or think of obligation. It is only paying, in a very imperfect measure, the debt we owe you for what you have done for American literature. Could you know the readiness with which every one to whom I applied contributed to this little offering, and could you have heard the warm expressions with which some accompanied their gift, you would have felt that the bread you had cast on the waters had indeed come back to you. Let no shadow of despondency, my dear friend, steal over you. Your friends do not and will not forget you. You shall be protected against "eating cares," which, I take it, mean cares lest we should not have enough to eat.

[Hawthorne replied:]

SALEM, January 30, 1850.

I read your letter in the vestibule of the Post Office; and it drew — what my troubles never have — the water to my eyes; so that I was glad of the sharply cold west wind that blew into them as I came homeward, and gave them an excuse for being red and bleared.

There was much that was very sweet — and something too that was very bitter — mingled with that same moisture. It is sweet to be

remembered and cared for by one's friends — some of whom know me for what I am, while others, perhaps, know me only through a generous faith — sweet to think that they deem me worth upholding in my poor work through life. And it is bitter, nevertheless, to need their support. It is something else besides pride that teaches me that ill-success in life is really and justly a matter of shame. I am ashamed of it, and I ought to be. The fault of a failure is attributable — in a great degree at least — to the man who fails. I should apply this truth in judging of other men; and it behoves me not to shun its point or edge in taking it home to my own heart. Nobody has a right to live in the world unless he be strong and able, and applies his ability to good purpose.

The money, dear Hillard, will smooth my path for a long time to come. The only way in which a man can retain his self-respect, while availing himself of the generosity of his friends, is by making it an incitement to his utmost exertions, so that he may not need their help again. I shall look upon it so — nor will shun any drudgery that my hand shall find to do, if thereby I may win bread.

[Four years afterward, when American Consul at Liverpool, Hawthorne wrote:]

LIVERPOOL, December 9, 1853.

DEAR HILLARD:

I herewith send you a draft on Ticknor for the sum (with interest included) which was so

kindly given me by unknown friends, through you, about four years ago.

I have always hoped and intended to do this from the first moment when I made up my mind to accept the money. It would not have been right to speak of this purpose before it was in my power to accomplish it; but it has never been out of my mind for a single day, nor hardly, I think, for a single working hour. I am most happy that this loan (as I may fairly call it, at this moment) can now be repaid without the risk on my part of leaving my wife and children utterly destitute. I should have done it sooner; but I felt that it would be selfish to purchase the great satisfaction for myself, at any fresh risk to them. We are not rich, nor are we ever likely to be; but the miserable pinch is over.

The friends who were so generous to me must not suppose that I have not felt deeply grateful, nor that my delight at relieving myself from this pecuniary obligation is of any ungracious kind. I have been grateful all along, and am more so now than ever. This act of kindness did me an unspeakable amount of good; for it came when I most needed to be assured that anybody thought it worth while to keep me from sinking. And it did me even greater good than this, in making me sensible of the need of sterner efforts than my former ones, in order to establish a right for myself to live and be comfortable. For it is my creed (and was so even at that wretched time) that a man has no claim upon

his fellow-creatures, beyond bread and water and a grave, unless he can win it by his own strength or skill. But so much the kinder were those unknown friends whom I thank again with all my heart.

"The Scarlet Letter"

[Hawthorne finished "The Scarlet Letter" in Salem on February 3, 1850. He wrote James T. Fields, a partner in the firm of Ticknor & Co., Boston, his publishers:]

. . . If the book is made up entirely of "The Scarlet Letter," it will be too sombre. I found it impossible to relieve the shadows of the story with so much light as I would gladly have thrown in. Keeping so close to its point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people, and disgust some. Is it safe, then, to stake the book on this one chance?

[He wrote to his friend, Horatio Bridge:]

Salem, February 4, 1850.

I finished my book only yesterday: one end being in the press in Boston, while the other was in my head here in Salem; so that, as you see, the story is at least fourteen miles long. . .

My book, the publisher tells me, will not be out before April. He speaks of it in tremendous terms of approbation; so does Mrs. Hawthorne, to whom I read the conclusion last night. It broke her heart, and sent her to bed with a

grievous headache — which I look upon as a triumphant success. Judging from its effect on her and the publisher, I may calculate on what the bowlers call a "ten-strike." But I do not make any such calculation.

"The House of the Seven Gables"

[to his publishers]

Lenox, October 1, 1850.

. . . I shan't have the new story ready by November, for I am never good for anything in the literary way till after the first autumnal frost, which has somewhat such an effect on my imagination that it does on the foliage here about me — multiplying and brightening its hues; though they are likely to be sober and shabby enough after all.

[A few weeks afterward:]

. . . I write diligently, but not so rapidly as I had hoped. I find the book requires more care and thought than "The Scarlet Letter," also I have to wait oftener for a mood. "The Scarlet Letter" being all in one tone, I had only to get my pitch, and could then go on interminably. Many passages of this book ought to be finished with the minuteness of a Dutch picture, in order to give them their proper effect. Sometimes, when tired of it, it strikes me that the whole is an absurdity, from beginning to end; but the fact is, in writing a romance, a man is always, or always ought to be, careering

on the utmost verge of a precipitous absurdity, and the skill lies in running as close as possible without actually tumbling over. My prevailing idea is that the book ought to succeed better than "The Scarlet Letter," though I have no idea that it will.

[On July 8, 1851, after the book had been fully criticised he wrote to Horatio Bridge:]

I think it a work more characteristic of my mind, and more proper and natural for me to write, than the "Scarlet Letter," but, for that very reason, less likely to interest the public. Nevertheless, it appears to have sold better than the former, and I think is more sure of retaining the ground that it acquires.

Life in England

[TO LONGFELLOW]

LIVERPOOL, August 30, 1854.

DEAR LONGFELLOW:

Our friend Henry Bright has handed me some autographs for you.

Why don't you come over?— being now a man of leisure, and with nothing to keep you in America. If I were in your position, I think that I should make my home on this side of the water — though always with an indefinite and never-to-be-executed intention to go back and die in my native land. America is a good land for young people, but not for those who are past their prime. It is impossible to grow

old comfortably there, for nothing keeps you in countenance. . . . Everything is so delightfully sluggish here! It is so pleasant to find people holding on to old ideas, and hardly now beginning to dream of matters that are already old with us. I have had enough of progress. Now I want to stand stock still, or rather to go back twenty years or so; and that is what I seem to have done in coming to England. Then, too, it is so agreeable to find one's self relieved from the tyranny of public opinion; or, at any rate, under the jurisdiction of quite a different public sentiment from what we have left behind us. A man of individuality and refinement can certainly live far more comfortably here — provided he has the means to live at all — than in New England. Be it owned, however, that I sometimes feel a tug at my very heartstrings when I think of my old home and friends. . . . Believe me most sincerely yours.

A Retrospect at Fifty

[In one of his English Note-books, Hawthorne wrote in Liverpool, on Christmas Day, 1854:]

I think I have been happier this Christmas than ever before — by my own fireside and with my wife and children about me — more content to enjoy what I have, less anxious for anything beyond it in this life. My early life was perhaps a good preparation for the declining half of life; it having been such a blank that any thereafter would compare favourably with it. For a

long, long while I have occasionally been visited with a singular dream; and I have an impression that I have dreamed it ever since I have been in England. It is that I am still at college — or, sometimes even at school — and there is a sense that I have been there unconscionably long, and have quite failed to make such progress as my contemporaries have done; and I seem to meet some of them with a feeling of shame and depression that broods over me as I think of it, even when awake. This dream, recurring through all these twenty or thirty years, must be one of the effects of that heavy seclusion in which I shut myself up for twelve years after leaving college, when everybody moved on and left me behind. How strange that it should come now when I may call myself famous and prosperous! — when I am happy, too!

Hawthorne as a Lover

[On July 9, 1842, Hawthorne was married to Sophia Amelia, daughter of Dr. Nathaniel Peabody of Boston Hawthorne's was a perfect marriage. His love-letters reveal how large, warm and constant a heart throbbed beneath his frigid exterior.]

May 26, 1839.

. . . It is very singular (but I do not suppose I can express it) that, while I love you so dearly, and while I am so conscious of the deep union of our spirits, still I have an awe of you that I never felt for anybody else. Awe is not the word, either, because it might imply

something stern in you; whereas — but you must make it out for yourself. I do wish I could put this into words — not so much for your satisfaction (because I believe you will understand) as for my own. I suppose I should have pretty much the same feeling if an angel were to come from heaven and be my dearest friend — only the angel could not have the tenderest of human natures too, the sense of which is mingled with this sentiment. Perhaps it is because, in meeting you, I really meet a spirit, whereas the obstructions of earth have prevented such a meeting in every other case. But I leave the mystery here. Some time or other it may be made plainer to me. But methinks it converts my love into religion. And then it is singular, too, that this awe (or whatever it be) does not prevent me from feeling that it is I who have the charge of you. And will not you rebel? Oh, no; because I possess the power to guide only so far as I love you. My love gives me the right, and your love consents to it.

Since writing the above, I have been asleep; and I dreamed that I had been sleeping a whole year in the open air, and that while I slept, the grass grew around me. It seemed, in my dream, that the bedclothes were spread beneath me; and when I awoke (in my dream) I snatched them up, and the earth under them looked black, as if it had been burnt — a square place, exactly the size of the bedclothes. Yet there were grass and herbage scattered over

this burnt space, looking as fresh and bright and dewy as if the summer rain and the summer sun had been cherishing them all the time. Interpret this for me; but do not draw any sombre omens from it. What is signified by my nap of a whole year (it made me grieve to think that I had lost so much of eternity)? — and what was the fire that blasted the spot of earth which I occupied, while the grass flourished all around? — and what comfort am I to draw from the fresh herbage amid the burnt space? But it is a silly dream, and you cannot expound any sense out of it.

June 22, 1840.

Belovedest, what a letter! Never was so much beauty poured out of any heart before; and to read it over and over is like bathing my brow in a fresh fountain, and drinking draughts that renew the life within me. Nature is kind and motherly to you, and takes you into her inmost heart and cherishes you there, because you look on her with holy and loving eyes. How can you say that I have ever written anything beautiful, being yourself so potent to reproduce whatever is loveliest? If I did not know that you loved me, I should even be ashamed before you. Worthy of you I am not; but you will make me so, for there will be time or eternity enough for your blessed influence to work on me. Would that we could build our cottage this very summer, amid these scenes of Concord which you describe. My heart

thirsts and languishes to be there, away from the hot sun, and the coal-dust, and the steaming docks, and the thick-pated, stubborn, contentious men, with whom I brawl from morning till night, and all the weary toil that quite engrosses me, and yet occupies only a small part of my being, which I did not know existed before I became a measurer, (at the Custom House). I do think I should sink down quite disheartened and inanimate if you were not happy, and gathering from earth and sky enjoyment for both of us; but this makes me feel that my real, innermost soul is apart from all these unlovely circumstances, and that it has not ceased to exist, as I might sometimes suspect, but is nourished and kept alive through you. You know not what comfort I have in thinking of you amid those beautiful scenes and amid those sympathising hearts. If you are well and happy, if your step is light and joyous there, and your cheek is becoming rosier, and if your heart makes pleasant music, then is it not better for you to stay there a little longer? And if better for you, is it not so for me likewise? Now, I do not press you to stay, but leave it all to your wisdom; and if you feel it is now time to come home, then let it be so.

Hawthorne as a Husband

[From his Journal, June, 1843.]

. . . Having made up my bunch of flowers, I return home with them to my wife,

of whom what is loveliest among them are to me the imperfect emblems. My imagination twines her and the flowers into one wreath; and when I offer them to her, it seems as if I were introducing her to beings that have somewhat of her own nature in them. "My lily, here are your sisters ; cherish them!"— this is what my fancy says, while my heart smiles, and rejoices at the conceit. Then my dearest wife rejoices in the flowers, and hastens to give them water, and arranges them so beautifully that they are glad to have been gathered, from the muddy bottom of the river, and its wet, tangled margin — from among plants of evil smell and uncouth aspect, where the slimy eel and the frog and the black mud-turtle hide themselves, — glad of being rescued from this unworthy life, and made the ornaments of our parlour. What more could the loveliest of flowers desire? It is its earthly triumph, which it will remember with joy when it blooms in the paradise of flowers. . . . The chief event of the afternoon, and the happiest one of the day, is our walk. She must describe these walks; for where she and I have enjoyed anything together, I always deem my pen unworthy and inadequate to record it.

My wife is, in the strictest sense, my sole companion, and I need no other; there is no vacancy in my mind, any more than in my heart. In truth, I have spent so many years in total seclusion from all human society, that it is no wonder

if now I feel all my desires satisfied by this sole intercourse. But she has come to me from the midst of many friends and a large circle of acquaintance; yet she lives from day to day in this solitude, seeing nobody but myself and our Molly, while the snow of our avenue is untrodden for weeks by any footstep save mine; yet she is always cheerful. Thank God that I suffice for her boundless heart!

. . . Dear little wife, after finishing my record in the journal, I sat a long time in grandmother's chair, thinking of many things; but the thought of thee, the great thought of thee, was among all other thoughts, like the pervading sunshine falling through the boughs and branches of a tree and tingeing every separate leaf. And surely thou shouldst not have deserted me without manufacturing a sufficient quantity of sunshine to last till thy return. Art thou not ashamed?

Methinks my little wife is twin-sister to the Spring; so they should greet one another tenderly —for they both are fresh and dewy, both full of hope and cheerfulness; both have bird-voices, always singing out of their hearts; both are sometimes overcast with flitting mists, which only make the flowers bloom brighter; and both have power to renew and re-create the weary spirit, I have married the Spring! I am husband to the month of May!

CHARLES DICKENS

[Throughout the English-speaking world, Dickens maintains great popularity. This he owes to his abounding vitality, his prodigal invention, his fun, his humanity. Forster tells us in his Life that Dickens was a capital actor. His readers can well believe it. With a slight turn of fortune's wheel he would have been a great playwright, too. As he wrote his novels he seemed to have the stage always before him, never losing sight of the means by which its effects are produced and heightened. Hence he passed, all too easily, from the dramatic to the theatrical, from sentiment to sentimentality, from portraiture to burlesque. He paints a Cheeryble, a Heep, a Pecksniff, in a single hue. These surely are not men but personified virtues or vices, recalling the Great Heart, the Mr. Facing-both-ways, the Mr. Ready-to-halt of John Bunyan.

The novels of Dickens, "David Copperfield" in particular, are largely written out of his own sufferings, struggles, and victories. His hardships as a child left a stamp of pain which he never outgrew. His limitations in training and discipline narrowed his field as a writer, but gave him a master-key to the hearts and minds of men and women born, like himself, to poverty and affliction. — Ed.]

Hardships as a Boy

[John Forster, the life-long friend and biographer of Dickens, gives in his Life the fragment of an autobiography by Dickens, here presented in its main paragraphs. They show how much the great novelist learned human nature in the school of misery as a child.

When Dickens was a boy of ten years of age, an inmate of his father's household was James Lamert. A kinsman George Lamert, had furnished capital to Josiah Warren for the establishment of a blacking factory in London, at 30 Hungerford Stairs, near the Strand. Dickens says:]

In an evil hour for me, as I often bitterly thought, its chief manager, James Lamert, who had lived with us in Bayham Street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first, and seven afterward. At any rate the offer was accepted very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking warehouse to begin my business life.

It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me, that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me — a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally — to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar school, and going to Cambridge.

Our relative had kindly arranged to teach me something in the dinner-hour, from twelve

to one, I think it was, every day. But an arrangement so incompatible with counting-house business soon died away, from no fault of his or mine; and for the same reason, my small work-table, and my grosses of pots, my papers, string, scissors, paste-pot, and labels, by little and little, vanished out of the recess in the counting-house, and kept company with the other small work-tables, grosses of pots, papers, string, scissors, and paste-pots, downstairs. It was not long before Bob Fagin and I, and another boy whose name was Paul Green, but who was currently believed to have been christened Poll (a belief which I transferred, long afterward again, to Mr. Sweedlepipe, in "Martin Chuzzlewit"), worked generally side by side. Bob Fagin was an orphan, and lived with his brother-in-law, a waterman. Poll Green's father had the additional distinction of being a fireman, and was employed at Drury Lane theatre; where another relation of Poll's, I think his little sister, did imps in the pantomimes.

No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these every day associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I

had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more, cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life.

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

A LITTLE GENTLEMAN

But I held some station at the blacking warehouse too. Besides that my relative at the

counting-house did what a man so occupied, and dealing with a thing so anomalous, could, to treat me as one upon a different footing from the rest, I never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. No man's imagination can overstep the reality. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first, that if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful with my hands, as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They and the men always spoke of me as "the young gentleman." A certain man (a soldier once) named Thomas, who was the foreman, and another man Harry, who was the carman, and wore a red jacket, used to call me "Charles" sometimes in speaking to me; but I think it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made some efforts to entertain them over our work with the results of some of the old readings, which were fast perishing out of my mind. Poll Green uprose once, and rebelled against the "young gentleman" usage; but Bob Fagin settled him speedily.

My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned as such, altogether; though I am solemnly convinced that I never, for one hour, was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy. I felt keenly, however, the being so cut off from my parents, my brothers, and sisters; and, when my day's work was done, going home to such a miserable blank. And *that*, I thought, might be corrected. One Sunday night I remonstrated with my father on this head, so pathetically and with so many tears, that his kind nature gave way. He began to think that it was not quite right. I do believe he had never thought so before, or thought about it. It was the first remonstrance I had ever made about my lot, and perhaps it opened up a little more than I intended. A back-attic was found for me at the house of an insolvent court agent, who lived in Lant Street in the Borough, where Bob Sawyer lodged many years afterward. A bed and bedding were sent over for me, and made up on the floor. The little window had a pleasant prospect of a timber-yard; and when I took possession of my new abode, I thought it was a paradise.

A FRIEND IN NEED

Bob Fagin was very good to me on the occasion of a bad attack of my old disorder, cramps. I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw in my old recess in the counting-house, and I rolled about

on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day. I got better, and quite easy toward evening; but Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. I was too proud to let him know about the prison; and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all of which Bob Fagin, in his goodness, was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark Bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house.

My usual way home was over Blackfriars Bridge, and down that turning in the Blackfriars Road which has Rowland Hill's chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop door on the other. There are a good many little low-browed old shops in that street, of a wretched kind; and some are unchanged now. I looked into one a few weeks ago, where I used to buy bootlaces on Saturday nights and saw the corner where I once sat down on a stool to have a pair of ready-made half-boots fitted on. I have been seduced more than once, in that street on a Saturday night, by a show-van at a corner; and have gone in, with a very motley assemblage, to see the Fat Pig, the Wild Indian, and the Little

Lady. There were two or three hat manufactories there, then (I think they are there still); and among the things which, encountered anywhere, or under any circumstances, will instantly recall that time, is the smell of hat-making.

I was such a little fellow, with my poor white hat, little jacket, and corduroy trousers, that frequently, when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to wash down the saveloy and the loaf I had eaten in the street, they did n't like to give it me. I remember, one evening (I had been somewhere for my father, and was going back to the Borough over Westminster Bridge), that I went into a public-house in Parliament Street, which is still there though altered, at the corner of the short street leading into Cannon Row, and said to the landlord behind the bar, "What is your very best — the VERY *best* — ale, a glass?" For, the occasion was a festive one, for some reason: I forget why. It may have been my birthday, or somebody else's. "Twopence," says he. "Then," says I, "just draw me a glass of that, if you please, with a good head to it." The landlord looked at me, in return, over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face; and instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen and said something to his wife, who came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three, before me now, in my study in Devonshire Terrace. The land-

lord in his shirt-sleeves, leaning against the bar window-frame; his wife looking over the little half-door; and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. They asked me a good many questions, as what my name was, how old I was, where I lived, how I was employed, etc., etc. To all of which, that I might commit nobody, I invented appropriate answers. They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the strongest on the premises; and the landlord's wife, opening the little half-door and bending down, gave me a kiss that was half-admiring and half-compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure.

DELIVERANCE AT LAST

At last, one day, my father, and the relative so often mentioned, quarreled; quarreled by letter, for I took the letter from my father to him which caused the explosion, but quarreled very fiercely. It was about me. It may have had some backward reference, in part, for anything I know, to my employment at the window. All I am certain of is, that, soon after I had given him the letter, my cousin (he was a sort of cousin by marriage) told me he was very much insulted about me; and that it was impossible to keep me, after that. I cried very much, partly because it was so sudden, and partly because in his anger he was violent about my father, though gentle to me. Thomas, the old soldier, comforted me, and said he was

sure it was for the best. With a relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home.

My mother set herself to accommodate the quarrel, and did so next day. She brought home a request for me to return next morning, and a high character of me, which I am very sure I deserved. My father said I should go back no more, and should go to school. I do not write resentfully or angrily: for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am; but I never afterward forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.

From that hour until this at which I write no word of that part of my childhood which I have now gladly brought to a close, has passed my lips to any human being. I have no idea how long it lasted; whether for a year, or much more, or less. From that hour, until this, my father and my mother have been stricken dumb upon it. I have never heard the least allusion to it, however far off and remote, from either of them. I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with any one, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God.

His Methods Defended

[To a critic who said that Dickens overdid his descriptions, he replied:]

. . . It does not seem to me to be enough to say of any description that it is the exact

truth. The exact truth must be there; but the merit or art in the narrator, is the manner of stating the truth. As to which thing in literature, it always seems to me that there is a world to be done. And in these times, when the tendency is to be frightfully literal and catalogue-like — to make the thing, in short, a sort of sum in reduction that any miserable creature can do in that way — I have an idea (really founded on the love of what I profess), that the very holding of popular literature through a kind of popular dark age, may depend on such fanciful treatment. . .

Penalties of Authorship

[to mrs. winter, a very dear friend and companion in his youth]

Tuesday, April 3, 1855.

My Dear Maria:

A necessity is upon me now — as at most times — of wandering about in my old wild way, to think. I could no more resist this on Sunday or yesterday than a man can dispense with food, or a horse can help himself from being driven. I hold my inventive capacity on the stern condition that it must master my whole life, often have complete possession of me, make its own demands upon me, and sometimes, for months together, put everything else away from me. If I had not known long ago that my place could never be held, unless I were at any moment ready to devote myself to it entirely,

I should have dropped out of it very soon. All this I can hardly expect you to understand — or the restlessness and waywardness of an author's mind. You have never seen it before you, or lived with it, or had occasion to think or care about it, and you cannot have the necessary consideration for it. "It is only half-an-hour." "It is only an afternoon." "It is only an evening," people say to me over and over again; but they don't know that it is impossible to command one's self sometimes to any stipulated and set disposal of five minutes, or that the mere consciousness of an engagement will sometimes worry a whole day. These are the penalites paid for writing books. Whoever is devoted to an art must be content to deliver himself wholly up to it, and to find his recompense in it. I am grieved if you suspect me of not wanting to see you, but I can't help it; I must go my way whether or no. Ever affectionately.

A Sketch of Himself

[to w. wilkie collins]

[It omits details given to Forster.]

Tavistock House, June 6, 1856.

I have never seen anything about myself in print which has much correctness in it — any biographical account of myself I mean. I do not supply such particulars when I am asked for them by editors and compilers, simply because I am asked for them every day. If you want to prime Forgues, you may tell him without

fear of anything wrong, that I was born at Portsmouth on the 7th of February, 1812; that my father was in the Navy Pay Office; that I was taken by him to Chatham when I was very young, and lived and was educated there till I was twelve or thirteen, I suppose; that I was then put to a school near London, where (as at other places) I distinguished myself like a brick; that I was put in the office of a solicitor, a friend of my father's, and did n't much like it; and after a couple of years (as well as I can remember) applied myself with a celestial or diabolical energy to the study of such things as would qualify me to be a first rate parliamentary reporter — at that time a calling pursued by many clever men who were young at the Bar; that I made my début in the gallery (at about eighteen, I suppose), engaged on a voluminous publication no longer in existence, called the *Mirror of Parliament;* that when the *Morning Chronicle* was purchased by Sir John Easthope and acquired a large circulation, I was engaged there, and that I remained there until I had begun to publish "Pickwick," when I found myself in a condition to relinquish that part of my labours; that I left the reputation behind me of being the best and most rapid reporter ever known, and that I could do anything in that way under any sort of circumstances, and often did. (I daresay I am at this present writing the best shorthand writer in the world.)

That I began, without any interest or intro-

duction of any kind, to write fugitive pieces for the old *Monthly Magazine*, when I was in the gallery for the *Mirror of Parliament;* that my faculty for descriptive writing was seized upon the moment I joined the *Morning Chronicle*, and that I was liberally paid there and handsomely acknowledged, and wrote the greater part of the short descriptive "Sketches by Boz" in that paper; that I had been a writer when I was a mere baby, and always an actor from the same age; that I married the daughter of a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, who was the great friend and assistant of Scott, and who first made Lockhart known to him.

And that here I am.

Finally, if you want any dates of publication of books, tell Wills and he 'll get them for you.

This is the first time I ever set down even these particulars, and, glancing them over, I feel like a wild beast in a caravan describing himself in the keeper's absence. Ever faithfully.

Criticism as Editor

[Dickens was editor of "Household Words," and afterward of "All the Year Round." His friend, Frank Stone, an artist, had sent him "Notes of Travel," by a lady. Dickens's comments show his sound sense as an editor, his warmth of heart as a man:]

Office of Household Words,
Monday, June 1, 1857.

My Dear Stone:

I know that what I am going to say will not be agreeable; but I rely on the auth-

oress's good sense; and say it knowing it to be the truth.

These "Notes" are destroyed by too much smartness. It gives the appearance of perpetual effort, stabs to the heart the nature that is in them, and wearies by the manner and not by the matter. It is the commonest fault in the world (as I have constant occasion to observe here), but it is a very great one. Just as you could n't bear to have an epergne or a candlestick on your table, supported by a light figure always on tiptoe and evidently in an impossible attitude for the sustainment of its weight, so all readers would be more or less oppressed and worried by this presentation of everything in one smart point of view, when they know it must have other, and weightier, and more solid properties. Airiness and good spirits are always delightful, and are inseparable from notes of a cheerful trip; but they should sympathise with many things as well as see them in a lively way. It is but a word or a touch that expresses this humanity, but without that little embellishment of good nature there is no such thing as humour. In this little MS. everything is too much patronised and condescended to, whereas the slightest touch of feeling for the rustic who is of the earth earthy, or of sisterhood with the homely servant who has made her face shine in her desire to please, would make a difference that the writer can scarcely imagine without trying it. The only relief in the twenty-one slips is the little

bit about the chimes. It *is* a relief, simply because it is an indication of some kind of sentiment. You don't want any sentiment laboriously made out in such a thing. You don't want any maudlin show of it. But you do want a pervading suggestion that it is there. It makes all the difference between being playful and being cruel. Again I must say, above all things — especially to young people writing: For the love of God don't condescend! Don't assume the attitude of saying, "See how clever I am, and what fun everybody else is!" Take any shape but that.

I observe an excellent quality of observation throughout, and think the boy at the shop, and all about him particularly good. I have no doubt whatever that the rest of the journal will be much better if the writer chooses to make it so. If she considers for a moment within herself, she will know that she derived pleasure from everything she saw, because she saw it with innumerable lights and shades upon it, and bound to humanity by innumerable fine links; she cannot possibly communicate anything of that pleasure to another by showing it from one little limited point only, and that point, observe, the one from which it is impossible to detach the exponent as the patroness of a whole universe of inferior souls. This is what everybody would mean in objecting to these notes (supposing them to be published), that they are too smart and too flippant.

As I understand this matter to be altogether between us three, and as I think your confidence, and hers, imposes a duty of friendship on me, I discharge it to the best of my ability. Perhaps I make more of it than you may have meant or expected; if so, it is because I am interested and wish to express it. If there had been anything in my objection not perfectly easy of removal, I might, after all, have hesitated to state it; but that is not the case. A very little indeed would make all this gaiety as sound and wholesome and good-natured in the reader's mind as it is in the writer's. Affectionately always.

Beggars All!

[To Henry Yates, the novelist, he sent this whimsical complaint:]

Tavistock House, Tavistock Square,
London, Wednesday, April 28th, 1858.

My Dear Yates:

For a good many years I have suffered a great deal from charities, but never anything like what I suffer now. The amount of correspondence they inflict upon me is really incredible. But this is nothing. Benevolent men get behind the piers of the gates, lying in wait for my going out; and when I peep shrinkingly from my study-windows, I see their pot-bellied shadows projected on the gravel. Benevolent bullies drive up in hansom cabs (with engraved portraits of their benevolent institutions hanging

over the aprons, like banners on their outward walls), and stay long at the door. Benevolent area-sneaks get lost in the kitchens and are found to impede the circulation of the knife-cleaning machine. My man has been heard to say (at the Burton Arms) "that if it was a wicious place, well and good — *that* an't door work; but that wen all the Christian wirtues is always a-shoulderin' and a-helberin' on you in the 'all, a-tryin' to git past you and cut upstairs into master's room, why no wages as you could n't name would n't make it up to you." Persecuted ever.

Toil as an Author

[In 1859 *All the Year Round* was established with Dickens as its editor. While "The Tale of Two Cities" was passing through the compositors' hands, Dickens wrote:]

[to john forster]

Gad's Hill, August 25, 1859.

. . . To come to myself. I have written and begged the *All the Year Round* publisher to send you directly four weeks' proofs beyond the current number, that are in type. I hope you will like them. Nothing but the interest of the subject, and the pleasure of striving with the difficulty of the forms of treatment, nothing in the mere way of money, I mean, could also repay the time and trouble of the incessant condensation. But I set myself the little task of making a *picturesque* story, rising in every chapter with characters true to nature, but whom the story itself should express, more

than they should express themselves, by dialogue. I mean, in other words, that I fancied a story of incident might be written, in place of the bestiality that is written under that pretence, pounding the characters out in its own mortar, and beating their own interests out of them. If you could have read the story all at once, I hope you would n't have stopped halfway.

A Fatherly Word on Taking Pains

[TO HIS SIXTH SON, HENRY FIELDING DICKENS, BORN IN 1849]

BALTIMORE, U. S.,
Tuesday, February 11, 1868.

MY DEAR HARRY:

I should have written to you before now but for constant and arduous occupation. . . .

I am very glad to hear of the success of your reading, and still more glad that you went at it in downright earnest. I should never have made my success in life if I had been shy of taking pains, or if I had not bestowed upon the least thing I have ever undertaken exactly the same attention and care that I have bestowed upon the greatest. Do everything at your best. It was but this last year that I set to and learned every word of my readings; and from ten years ago to last night, I have never read to an audience but I have watched for an opportunity of striking out something better somewhere. Look at such of my manuscripts as are in the

library at Gad's, and think of the patient hours devoted year after year to single lines. . . .

Ever, my dear Harry, your affectionate Father.

Advice to a Son Leaving Home

[Dickens's last child, Edward Bulwer Lytton Dickens, was born in 1852. At sixteen he went to Australia, with this parting word from his father:]

My Dearest Plorn:

I write this note to-day because your going away is much upon my mind, and because I want you to have a few parting words from me to think of now and then at quiet times. I need not tell you that I love you dearly, and am very, very sorry in my heart to part with you. But this life is half made up of partings, and these pains must be borne. It is my comfort and my sincere conviction that you are going to try the life for which you are best fitted. I think its freedom and wildness more suited to you than any experiment in a study or office would ever have been; and without that training, you could have followed no other suitable occupation.

What you have already wanted until now has been a set, steady, constant purpose. I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do as well as you can do it. I was not so old as you are now when I first had to win my food, and do this out of this determination, and I have never slackened in it since.

Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour than that you should. I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. As your brothers have gone away, one by one, I have written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and have entreated them all to guide themselves by this Book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of man. You will remember that you have never at home been harassed about religious observances, or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things, before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian Religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. Only one thing

more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it. I hope you will always be able to say in after life, that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well, or make him so happy, as by doing your duty.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

[The authoress of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," and "Villette" was born in 1821 and died in 1855. She was the daughter of a clergyman, whose clerical visitors form part of her wonderful portrait gallery. Her experience as a governess in Brussels gave her the ground-work for "Villette," which many readers deem her best novel.

From the "List of Books," published by the American Library Association, Boston, is taken this note:

"Charlotte Brontë is one of the most striking personalities in English fiction; her novels are wholly an expression of that personality. Her actual experience was very limited, and of a kind that distorted an impetuous and fiery spirit. She poured her soul out in her books with painful bitterness and tremendous passion. She broke up the literary convention which represented women as tame, passionless beings, and showed them conscious of an independent existence, hopelessly battling against circumstances. The modern reader is most surprised by the submissive attitude toward men assumed to be the correct one, by the almost ridiculous qualities ascribed to men, and believed by the author to be natural and admirable, and by the readiness of her real, thinking, feeling women to fall madly in love with these imaginary gods. Nevertheless, her purely subjective novels have all the excitement of those dependent on thrilling plot and incident. In delineating the manners of people of whom she had no actual knowledge (her heroes included), her inexperience is evident; her style is direct and keen, but too poignant for modern taste. Her books are simply the cry of a soul for something that life refused, and will probably be read as long as humanity is capable of the sensation of passionate pity."

From Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë" are drawn the following pages. — Ed.]

Loneliness in Brussels

[To ———]

October 13, 1843.

. . . I get on here after a fashion; but now that Mary D. has left Brussels, I have nobody to speak to, for I count the Belgians as nothing. Sometimes I ask myself how long shall I stay here; but as yet I have only asked the question, I have not answered it. However, when I have acquired as much German as I think fit, I think I shall pack up bag and baggage, and depart. Twinges of home-sickness cut me to the heart, every now and then. To-day the weather is glaring, and I am stupefied with a bad cold and headache. I have nothing to tell you. One day is like another in this place. I know you, living in the country, can hardly believe it is possible life can be monotonous in the centre of a brilliant capital like Brussels; but so it is I feel it most on holidays, when all the girls and teachers go out to visit, and it sometimes happens that I am left, during several hours, quite alone, with four great desolate school-rooms at my disposition. I try to read, I try to write; but in vain. I then wander about from room to room, but the silence and loneliness of all the house weighs down one's spirits like lead. You will hardly believe that Madame Heger [in whose school Miss Brontë was a teacher] (good and kind as I have described her) never comes near me on these occasions. I own,

I was astonished the first time I was left alone thus; when everybody else was enjoying the pleasures of a fête day with their friends, and she knew I was quite by myself, and never took the least notice of me. Yet, I understand, she praises me very much to everybody, and says what excellent lessons I give. She is not colder to me than she is to the other teachers; but they are less dependent on her than I am. They have relations and acquaintances in Brussels. You remember the letter she wrote me, when I was in England? How kind and affectionate that was! is it not odd? In the meantime, the complaints I make at present are a sort of relief which I permit myself. In all other respects I am well satisfied with my position, and you may say so to people who inquire after me (if any one does). Write to me, dear, whenever you can. You do a good deal when you send me a letter, for you comfort a very desolate heart.

Self-sacrifice

[To ———]

July 10, 1846.

. . . I see you are in a dilemma, and one of a peculiar and difficult nature. Two paths lie before you; you conscientiously wish to choose the right one, even though it be the most steep, straight, and rugged; but you do not know which is the right one; you cannot decide

whether duty and religion command you to go out into the cold and friendless world, and there to earn your living by governess drudgery, or whether they enjoin your continued stay with your aged mother, neglecting, *for the present*, every prospect of independency for yourself, and putting up with daily inconvenience, sometimes even with privations. I can well imagine, that it is next to impossible for you to decide for yourself in this matter, so I will decide it for you. At least, I will tell you what is my earnest conviction on the subject; I will show you candidly how the question strikes me. The right path is that which necessitates the greatest sacrifice of self-interest — which implies the greatest good to others; and this path, steadily followed, will lead, I believe, in time, to prosperity and to happiness; though it may seem, at the outset, to tend quite in a contrary direction. Your mother is both old and infirm; old and infirm people have but few sources of happiness — fewer almost than the comparatively young and healthy can conceive; to deprive them of one of these is cruel. If your mother is more composed when you are with her, stay with her. If she would be unhappy, in case you left her, stay with her. It will not apparently, as far as short-sighted humanity can see, be for your advantage to remain at ——, nor will you be praised and admired for remaining at home to comfort your mother; yet, probably, your own conscience will approve, and if it does, stay with

her. I recommend you to do what I am trying to do myself.

Imagination Needed

[To George Henry Lewes, who was to review "Jane Eyre" in *Frazer's Magazine*]

Haworth, November 6, 1847.

. . . You advise me, too, not to stray far from the ground of experience, as I become weak when I enter the region of fiction; and you say, "real experience is perennially interesting, and to all men."

I feel that this also is true: but, dear sir, is not the real experience of each individual very limited? And, if a writer dwells upon that solely or principally, is he not in danger of repeating himself, and also of becoming an egotist? Then, too, imagination is a strong, restless faculty, which claims to be heard and exercised; are we to be quite deaf to her cry, and insensate to her struggles? When she shows us bright pictures, are we never to look at them and try to reproduce them? And when she is eloquent, and speaks rapidly and urgently in our ear, are we not to write to her dictation?

A Book in Part May Write Itself

[To George Henry Lewes]

Haworth, January 12, 1848.

I thank you then sincerely for your generous review; and it is with the sense of double content

I express my gratitude, because I am now sure the tribute is not superfluous or obtrusive. You were not severe on "Jane Eyre"; you were very lenient. I am glad you told me my faults plainly in private, for in your public notice you touch on them so lightly, I should perhaps have passed them over, thus indicated, with too little reflection.

I mean to observe your warning about being careful how I undertake new works; my stock of materials is not abundant, but very slender; and, besides, neither my experience, my acquirements, nor my powers, are sufficiently varied to justify my ever becoming a frequent writer. I tell you this, because your article in *Frazer* left in me an uneasy impression that you were disposed to think better of the author of "Jane Eyre" than that individual deserved; and I would rather you had a correct than a flattering opinion of me, even though I should never see you.

If I ever do write another book, I think I will have nothing of what you call "melodrama"; I think so, but I am not sure. I think, too, I will endeavour to follow the counsel which shines out of Miss Austen's "mild eyes," "to finish more and be more subdued"; but neither am I sure of that. When authors write best, or, at least, when they write most fluently, an influence seems to waken in them, which becomes their master — which will have its own way — putting out of view all behests but its own, dictating certain words, and insisting on their being used, whether vehement or measured in their nature;

new-moulding characters, giving unthought-of turns to incidents, rejecting carefully elaborated old ideas, and suddenly creating and adopting new ones.

Is it not so? And should we try to counteract this influence? Can we indeed counteract it?

Originals of Her Characters

Her Sincerity

[to w. s. williams]

Haworth, September 21, 1849.

My dear Sir: I am obliged to you for preserving my secret [anonymity] being at least as anxious as ever (more anxious I cannot well be) to keep quiet. You asked me in one of your letters lately, whether I thought I should escape identification in Yorkshire. I am so little known, that I think I shall. Besides, the book is far less founded on the real, than perhaps appears. It would be difficult to explain to you how little actual experience I have had of life, how few persons I have known, and how very few have known me.

As an instance how the characters have been managed, take that of Mr. Helstone. If this character had an original, it was in the person of a clergyman who died some years since at the advanced age of eighty. I never saw him except once — at the consecration of a church — when I was a child of ten years old. I was then struck with his appearance, and stern, martial air. At a subsequent period, I heard him talked about

in the neighbourhood where he had resided: some mention him with enthusiasm — others with detestation. I listened to various anecdotes, balanced evidence against evidence, and drew an inference. The original of Mr. Hall I have seen; he knows me slightly; but he would as soon think I had closely observed him or taken him for a character — he would as soon, indeed, suspect me of writing a book — a novel — as he would his dog, Prince. Margaret Hall called "Jane Eyre" a "wicked book," on the authority of the *Quarterly*; an expression which coming from her, I will here confess, struck somewhat deep. It opened my eyes to the harm the *Quarterly* had done. Margaret would not have called it "wicked," if she had not been told so.

No matter — whether known or unknown — misjudged, or the contrary — I am resolved not to write otherwise. I shall bend as my powers tend. The two human beings [sisters] who understood me, and whom I understood, are gone; I have some that love me yet, and whom I love, without expecting, or having a right to expect, that they shall perfectly understand me. I am satisfied; but I must have my own way in the matter of writing. The loss of what we possess nearest and dearest to us in this world, produces an effect upon the character: we search out what we have yet left that can support, and, when found, we cling to it with a hold of new-strung tenacity. The faculty of imagination lifted me when I was sinking, three months

ago; its active exercise has kept my head above water since; its results cheer me now, for I feel that they have enabled me to give pleasure to others. I am thankful to God, who gave me the faculty; and it is for me a part of my religion to defend this gift, and to profit by its possession.

Where Friendship May Disappoint

[to w. s. williams]

July 21, 1851.

. . . I could not help wondering whether Cornhill will ever change for me, as Oxford has changed for you. I have some pleasant associations connected with it now — will these alter their character some day?

Perhaps they may — though I have faith to the contrary, because I think I do not exaggerate my partialities; I think I take faults along with excellences — blemishes together with beauties. And, besides, in the matter of friendship, I have observed that disappointment here arises chiefly, not from liking our friends too well, or thinking of them too highly, but rather from an over-estimate of their liking for and opinion of us; and that if we guard ourselves with sufficient scrupulousness of care from error in this direction and can be content, and even happy to give more affection than we receive — can make just comparison of circumstances, and be severely accurate in drawing, inferences thence, and never let self-love blind our eyes — I think we may manage to get through life with consistency

and constancy, unembittered by that misanthropy which springs from revulsions of feeling. All this sounds a little metaphysical, but it is good sense if you consider it. The moral of it is, that if we would build on a sure foundation in friendship, we must love our friends for their sakes rather than for our own; we must look at their truth to themselves, full as much as their truth to us. In the latter case, every wound to self-love would be a cause of coldness; in the former, only some painful change in the friend's character and disposition — some fearful breach in his allegiance to his better self — could alienate the heart.

How interesting your old maiden-cousin's gossip about your parents must have been to you; and how gratifying to find that the reminiscence turned on none but pleasant facts and characteristics! Life must, indeed, be slow in that little decaying hamlet amongst the chalk hills. After all, depend upon it, it is better to be worn out with work in a thronged community, than to perish of inaction in a stagnant solitude: take this truth into consideration whenever you get tired of work and bustle.

Novelty versus Originality

[to mrs. gaskell]

Haworth, August 6, 1851.

. . . Then I feel sure you speak justly of Thackeray's lecture. You do well to set aside odious comparisons, and to wax im-

patient of that trite twaddle about "nothing newness"— a jargon which simply proves, in those who habitually use it, a coarse and feeble faculty of appreciation; an inability to discern the relative value of originality and novelty, a lack of that refined perception which, dispensing with the stimulus of an ever-new subject, can derive sufficiency of pleasure from freshness of treatment. To such critics, the prime of a summer morning would bring no delight; wholly occupied with railing at their cook for not having provided a novel and piquant breakfast-dish, they would remain insensible to such influences as lie in sunrise, dew, and breeze: therein would be "nothing new."

An Unhasting Worker

[In the autumn of 1851 Charlotte Brontë's health became more and more impaired. She had begun "Villette," and her publishers were impatient for its completion. She wrote to them:]

. . . It is not at all likely that my book will be ready at the time you mention. If my health is spared, I shall get on with it as fast as is consistent with its being done, if not well, yet as well as I can do it. Not one whit faster. When the mood leaves me (it has left me now, without vouchsafing so much as a word or a message when it will return) I put by the MS. and wait till it comes back again. God knows, I sometimes have to wait long — very long it seems to me. Meantime, if I might make a

request to you, it would be this. Please to say nothing about my book till it is written, and in your hands. You may not like it. I am not myself elated with it as far as it is gone, and authors, you need not be told, are always tenderly indulgent, even blindly partial to their own. Even if it should turn out reasonably well, still I regard it as ruin to the prosperity of an ephemeral book like a novel, to be much talked of beforehand, as if it were something great. People are apt to conceive, or at least to profess, exaggerated expectation, such as no performance can realise: then ensue disappointment and the due revenge, detraction, and failure. If when I write, I were to think of the critics who, I know, are waiting for Currer Bell, [her pseudonym] ready "to break all his bones or ever he comes to the bottom of the den," my hand would fall paralysed on my desk. However, I can but do my best, and then muffle my head in the mantle of Patience, and sit down at her feet and wait.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Books Which Have Influenced Me

[In 1887 the *British Weekly*, London, published a series of articles from men of prominence, each of whom told about "Books which have influenced me." Robert Louis Stevenson's contribution follows:

His works in various editions; his Life, by Graham Balfour; his Letters, edited by Sydney Colvin, are published by C. Scribner's Sons, New York.]

The Editor has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep. It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaissance and review that the writer awakes to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography, or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned, the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be. But when word has been passed (even to an editor), it should, if possible, be kept; and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes weak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me.

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma, which he must afterward discover to be inexact; they

do not teach him a lesson, which he must afterward unlearn. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life; they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others; and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change — that monstrous, consuming *ego* of ours being, for the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances where we breathe a magnanimous atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think, in an impressionable hour, played by Mrs. Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long, so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan — the elderly D'Artagnan of the "Vicomte de Bragelonne." I know not a

more human soul, nor, in his way, a finer; I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the "Pilgrim's Progress," a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said; their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature; they mould by contact; we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first, though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived—the "Essays" of Montaigne. That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day; they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain; they will have their "linen decencies" and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason; and (again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life, than they or their contemporaries.

The next book, in order of time, to influence me, was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move any one if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Any one would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying. But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent.

I come next to Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues. But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading. I will be very frank — I believe it is so with all good books, except perhaps, fiction. The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed. Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer round that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself. New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough

truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions. He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers. There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good.

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better. How much of his vast structure will bear the touch of time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire. But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful; and the reader will find there a *caput-mortuum* [worthless remains] of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness but with most of its essentials; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.

"Goethe's Life," by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands — a strange instance of the partiality of man's good and man's evil. I know no one whom I less admire than Goethe; he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life, and wantonly wounding friends, in that crowning offence of "Werther," and in his own character a mere pen-and-ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights

and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office. And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained! Biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character. History serves us well to this effect, but in the originals, not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man, and even in the originals only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange forms, often inverted and under strange names, often interchanged. Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-respecting gentleman. It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman empire.

This brings us by a natural transition to a

very noble book — the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings — those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man. Its address lies farther back: its lesson comes more deeply home; when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue.

Wordsworth should perhaps come next. Every one has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell precisely how. A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that there is among the hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us. I do not know that you learn a lesson; you need not — Mill did not — agree with any one of his beliefs; and yet the spell is cast. Such are the best teachers: a dogma learned is only a new error — the old one was perhaps as good; but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession. These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane

of art; it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate.

I should never forgive myself if I forgot "The Egoist." It is art, if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art, and from all the novels I have read (and I have read thousands) stands in a place by itself. Here is a Nathan for the modern David; here is a book to send the blood into men's faces. Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art; we can all be angry with our neighbour; what we want is to be shown not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind. And "The Egoist" is a satire; so much must be allowed; but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam. It is yourself that is hunted down; these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision. A young friend of Mr. Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony. "This is too bad of you," he cried. "Willoughby is me!" "No, my dear fellow," said the author, "he is all of us." I have read "The Egoist" five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again; for I am like the young friend of the anecdote — I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself.

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that

I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt, whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning point in my life, and Penn, whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country's laws — a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic islands. That I should commemorate all is more than I can hope or the editor could ask. It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books, to say a word or two about the improvable reader. The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood. It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment — a free grace, I find I must call it — by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely wrong. He may hold dogmas; he may hold them passionately; and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all. Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him. They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues. He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it. A human

truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays. It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences. Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers; he will never be a reader.

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books; it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food; and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early, and it is his chief support; he goes on unafraid, laying down the law; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service; but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated; and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come

there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

Sketches His Career to 1887

[During the winter of 1887–88, Robert Louis Stevenson resided at Saranac Lake, in the Adirondacks. In a letter to George Iles he thus sketched his work to the autumn of 1887:]

Saranac Lake, N. Y., October 29, 1887.

Dear Mr. Iles: The undersigned was born in 1850, November the 13th, in the city of Edinburgh. He was always sick when he was a child. You will find a good deal of autobiographical matter in the new volumes of essays, "Memories and Portraits," soon to be issued by Charles Scribner's Sons. He — oh hang this! — I was educated for a civil engineer on my father's design, and was at the building of harbours and lighthouses, and worked in a carpenter's shop and a brass foundry and hung about wood yards and the like. Then it came out that I was learning nothing, and, on being tightly cross-questioned during a dreadful evening walk, I owned I cared for nothing but literature. My father said that was no profession, but I might be called to the bar if I chose; so, at the age of twenty-one, I began to study law.

Two years after I met Sidney Colvin, who took me up and introduced my work. My first paper appeared, just after I was twenty-three, in the

Portfolio, under the harmless anagram of "L. S. Stoneven." It was called "Roads." My second, written that same winter at Mentone, came out in *Macmillan*. It has been reprinted — "Ordered South." It took me pretty near three months to write, I imagine. No one ever had such pains to learn a trade as I had; but I slogged at it, day in, day out, and I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than almost any man of letters in the world. My first story (that I had dared to reprint) was "Will o' the Mill," written in France. The scenery is a kind of hash-up of the Murgthal in Baden and the Brenner Pass in the Tyrol, over which I went when I was twelve. The next was "A Lodging for a Night," written concurrently with my study on Villon in "Men and Books." The first "New Arabian Nights," properly so called, was begun at the Burford Bridge Inn (see a gossip in "Romance," in the forthcoming volume), where I stayed to be near George Meredith; they were continued in London, Edinburgh, Paris, Barbizon, and finished at Le Monastère (see "Travels with a Donkey"), all within about five months; this will give you a notion of my roving ways. That same autumn I wrote "Providence and the Guitar," part at London, part in Cambridge; so that year saw me quite the story teller. It was that same spring that I had brought out "An Inland Voyage," my first volume. "The Pavilion on the Links," was begun in London, finished in

Monterey, California. "Treasure Island," begun at Braemar, finished at Davos; the whole in two bursts of about fifteen days each, my quickest piece of work. "Kidnapped" was all written at Bournemouth, inside of a year, in probably five months actual writing, and one of these months entirely over the last chapters, which had to be put together without interest or inspiration, almost word by word, for I was entirely worked out.

"Kidnapped," you may like to know, I consider infinitely my best, and, indeed, my only good story. "Prince Otto" was written at Hyères; it took me about five months, in the inside of a year, not counting the first chapter, which was written before at Kingussie. "Otto" was my hardest effort, for I wished to do something very swell, which did not quite come off. Whole chapters of "Otto" were written as often as five or six times, and one chapter, that of the Countess and the Princess, eight times by me and once by my wife — my wife's version was the second last. "The Treasure of Franchard" was mostly written at Kingussie. "Jekyll," "Olalla," "Markheim" were all written at Bournemouth. "The Dynamiter," begun at Hyères, finished at Bournemouth. "Thrawn Janet," at Kincaid, near Pitlochrie. "The Merry Men," begun at Pitlochrie, finished at Davos. My life of Fleeming Jenkin, now in the press, is another child of Bournemouth. "The Silverado Squatters" hails from Hyères, "Travels with a Donkey" from

Edinburgh, "An Inland Voyage" from Edinburgh and Dieppe. In a forthcoming number of *Scribner's Magazine* you will find something about my dreams. This is enough gossip, I hope; if you want more let me know.

A Word on American Writers

[The late Henry D. Lloyd, of Chicago, wrote "The Story of a Great Monopoly" and other striking articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*. These were sent to Stevenson, in whom they excited the notion of working the trusts into a story. He never carried out the project. He died at Vailima, Samoa, December 3, 1894. Seven years prior, from the midst of a violent snowstorm he wrote:]

Saranac Lake, December 14, 1887.

Dear Mr. Iles: Goodness knows what we have to thank you for — or I should say, what not. I was exceedingly interested by the articles of Mr. Lloyd, who is certainly a very capable, clever fellow: he writes the most workmanlike article of any man known to me in America, unless it should be Parkman. Not a touch in Lloyd of the amateur; and bar James, Howells, and the aforesaid Parkman, I cannot call to mind one American writer who has not a little taint of it.

Our news is good, in so far as it concerns myself, not so good in so far as it concerns my wife, with whom I fear Saranac does not agree. She is down to New York for a change; it howls and blows, and rains and snows in a pleasant medley of ill weathers; and I am, from the midst of it, Yours most truly.

JOSEPH CONRAD

[It is not often that the works of a writer during his lifetime are accorded an estimate of permanency such as has been almost universally accorded the books of Joseph Conrad. Acclaimed by the literary critics of Europe and America as one of the greatest living masters of English prose, if not the greatest, he gives to his creations the touch of a genius of which literary immortality is the inevitable and rightful heritage.

Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski was born in the Ukraine, in southern Poland, on December 6, 1857. He went to sea in 1877, in fulfilment of a vague boyhood dream. (Once he had stood before a map of Africa, placed his finger on a blank space representing unexplored territory, and cried: "I shall go *there*." "There" happened to be the Congo.) In 1894, broken in health by a harrowing experience in this same Congo, he retired from the sea after sixteen years of continuous service in the British Merchant Marine. He was then thirty-seven years of age. In his bag was the manuscript of an unfinished novel, begun about 1889, when Conrad was thirty-two.

That novel was "Almayer's Folly." Mr. Conrad has related the remarkable adventures of the manuscript in his book, "A Personal Record," which, together with his other book of memoirs and impressions, "The Mirror of the Sea," constitute the nearest thing to an autobiography that he has written.

"Almayer's Folly" was published in 1895. The following year "An Outcast of the Islands" appeared. In 1897, "The Nigger of the Narcissus" was published. This was followed in 1898 by a volume of short stories, "Tales of Unrest." In 1900 appeared "Lord Jim," that classic of a study in cowardice. His other books and the year of their publication follow: "The Inheritors" (1901), written in collaboration with Ford Madox Hueffer; "Youth" (1902); "Typhoon and Other Stories" (1903); "Falk" (1903); "Romance," written in collaboration with Ford Madox Hueffer (1903); "Nostromo" (1904); "The Mirror of the Sea" (1906); "The Secret Agent" (1907); "A Set of Six" (1908); "Under Western Eyes" (1911);

"A Personal Record" (1912); "'Twixt Land And Sea" (1912); "Chance" (1913); "Victory" (1915); "Within the Tides" (1915); "The Shadow Line" (1917); "The Arrow of Gold" (1919); "The Rescue" (1920); "One Day More" (Limited Edition, 1920); "Notes on My Books" (Limited Edition, 1920); "Notes on Life and Letters" (1921).

The following is an extract from Chapter 1 of "A Personal Record":†

* A PERSONAL RECORD

Books may be written in all sorts of places. Verbal inspiration may enter the berth of a mariner on board a ship frozen fast in a river in the middle of a town; and since saints are supposed to look benignantly on humble believers, I indulge in the pleasant fancy that the shade of old Flaubert—who imagined himself to be (among other things) a descendant of Vikings—might have hovered with amused interest over the docks of a 2,000-ton steamer called the *Adowa*, on board of which, gripped by the inclement winter alongside a quay in Rouen, the tenth chapter of "Almayer's Folly" was begun. With interest, I say, for was not the kind Norman giant with enormous mustaches and a thundering voice the last of the Romantics? Was he not, in his unworldly, almost ascetic, devotion to his art, a sort of literary, saint-like hermit?

"'*It has set at last,' said Nina to her mother, pointing to the hills behind which the sun had sunk.*" . . . These words of Almayer's ro-

*An extract from the first chapter of "A Personal Record" published by Doubleday, Page and Company (Copyright, 1912, by Harper and Brothers.)

mantic daughter I remember tracing on the gray paper of a pad which rested on the blanket of my bed-place. They referred to a sunset in Malayan Isles and shaped themselves in my mind, in a hallucinated vision of forests and rivers and seas, far removed from a commercial and yet romantic town of the northern hemisphere. But at that moment the mood of visions and words was cut short by the third officer, a cheerful and casual youth, coming in with a bang of the door and the exclamation: "You've made it jolly warm in here."

It was warm. I had turned on the steam-heater after placing a tin under the leaky water-cock—for perhaps you do not know that water will leak where steam will not. I am not aware of what my young friend had been doing on deck all that morning, but the hands he rubbed together vigorously were very red and imparted to me a chilly feeling by their mere aspect. He has remained the only banjoist of my acquaintance, and being also a younger son of a retired colonel, the poem of Mr. Kipling, by a strange aberration of associated ideas, always seems to me to have been written with an exclusive view to his person. When he did not play the banjo he loved to sit and look at it. He proceeded to this sentimental inspection, and after meditating awhile over the strings under my silent scrutiny inquired, airily:

"What are you always scribbling there, if it's fair to ask?"

It was a fair enough question, but I did not answer him, and simply turned the pad over with

a movement of instinctive secrecy: I could not have told him he had put to flight the psychology of Nina Almayer, her opening speech of the tenth chapter, and the words of Mrs. Almayer's wisdom which were to follow in the ominous oncoming of a tropical night. I could not have told him that Nina had said, "It has set at last." He would have been extremely surprised and perhaps have dropped his precious banjo. Neither could I have told him that the sun of my sea-going was setting, too, even as I wrote the words expressing the impatience of passionate youth bent on its desire. I did not know this myself, and it is safe to say he would not have cared, though he was an excellent young fellow and treated me with more deference than, in our relative positions, I was strictly entitled to.

He lowered a tender gaze on his banjo, and I went on looking through the port-hole. The round opening framed in its brass rim a fragment of the quays, with a row of casks ranged on the frozen ground and the tail-end of a great cart. A red-nosed carter in a blouse and a woollen night-cap leaned against the wheel. An idle, strolling custom-house guard, belted over his blue *capote*, had the air of being depressed by exposure to the weather and the monotony of official existence. The background of grimy houses found a place in the picture framed by my port-hole, across a wide stretch of paved quay brown with frozen mud. The colouring was sombre, and the most conspicuous feature was a little café with cur-

tained windows and a shabby front of white woodwork, corresponding with the squalor of these poorer quarters bordering the river. We had been shifted down there from another berth in the neighbourhood of the Opera House, where that same port-hole gave me a view of quite another sort of café—the best in the town, I believe, and the very one where the worthy Bovary and his wife, the romantic daughter of old Père Renault, had some refreshment after the memorable performance of an opera which was the tragic story of Lucia di Lammermoor in a setting of light music.

I could recall no more the hallucination of the Eastern Archipelago which I certainly hoped to see again. The story of "Almayer's Folly" got put away under the pillow for that day. I do not know that I had any occupation to keep me away from it; the truth of the matter is that on board that ship we were leading just then a contemplative life. I will not say anything of my privileged position. I was there "just to oblige," as an actor of standing may take a small part in the benefit performance of a friend.

As far as my feelings were concerned I did not wish to be in that steamer at that time and in those circumstances. And perhaps I was not even wanted there in the usual sense in which a ship "wants" an officer. It was the first and last instance in my sea life when I served ship-owners who have remained completely shadowy to my apprehension. I do not mean this for the well-known firm of London ship-brokers which had

chartered the ship to the, I will not say short-lived, but ephemeral Franco-Canadian Transport Company. A death leaves something behind, but there was never anything tangible left from the F. C. T. C. It flourished no longer than roses live, and unlike the roses it blossomed in the dead of winter, emitted a sort of faint perfume of adventure, and died before spring set in. But indubitably it was a company, it had even a house-flag, all white with the letters F. C. T. C. artfully tangled up in a complicated monogram. We flew it at our mainmast head, and now I have come to the conclusion that it was the only flag of its kind in existence. All the same we on board, for many days, had the impression of being a unit of a large fleet with fortnightly departures for Montreal and Quebec as advertised in pamphlets and prospectuses which came aboard in a large package in Victoria Dock, London, just before we started for Rouen, France. And in the shadowy life of the F. C. T. C. lies the secret of that, my last employment in my calling, which in a remote sense interrupted the rhythmical development of Nina Almayer's story.

The then secretary of the London Shipmasters' Society, with its modest rooms in Fenchurch Street, was a man of indefatigable activity and the greatest devotion to his task. He is responsible for what was my last association with a ship. I call it that because it can hardly be called a sea-going experience. Dear Captain Froud—it is impossible not to pay him the tribute of affec-

tionate familiarity at this distance of years—had very sound views as to the advancement of knowledge and status for the whole body of the officers of the mercantile marine. He organized for us courses of professional lectures, St. John ambulance classes, corresponded industriously with public bodies and members of Parliament on subjects touching the interests of the service; and as to the oncoming of some inquiry or commission relating to matters of the sea and to the work of seamen, it was a perfect godsend to his need of exerting himself on our corporate behalf. Together with this high sense of his official duties he had in him a vein of personal kindness, a strong disposition to do what good he could to the individual members of that craft of which in his time he had been a very excellent master. And what greater kindness can one do to a seaman than to put him in the way of employment? Captain Froud did not see why the Shipmasters' Society, besides its general guardianship of our interests, should not be unofficially an employment agency of the very highest class.

"I am trying to persuade all our great shipowning firms to come to us for their men. There is nothing of a trade-union spirit about our society, and I really don't see why they should not," he said once to me. "I am always telling the captains, too, that, all things being equal, they ought to give preference to the members of the society. In my position I can generally find for them what they want among our members or our associate members."

In my wanderings about London from west to east and back again (I was very idle then) the two little rooms in Fenchurch Street were a sort of resting place where my spirit, hankering after the sea, could feel itself nearer to the ships, the men, and the life of its choice—nearer there than on any other spot of the solid earth. This resting-place used to be, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, full of men and tobacco smoke, but Captain Froud had the smaller room to himself and there he granted private interviews, whose principal motive was to render service. Thus, one murky November afternoon he beckoned me in with a crooked finger and that peculiar glance above his spectacles which is perhaps my strongest physical recollection of the man.

"I have had in here a shipmaster, this morning," he said, getting back to his desk and motioning me to a chair, "who is in want of an officer. It's for a steamship. You know, nothing pleases me more than to be asked, but, unfortunately, I do not quite see my way . . ."

As the outer room was full of men I cast a wondering glance at the closed door; but he shook his head.

"Oh, yes, I should be only too glad to get that berth for one of them. But the fact of the matter is, the captain of that ship wants an officer who can speak French fluently, and that's not so easy to find. I do not know anybody myself but you. It's a second officer's berth and, of course, you would not care . . . would you now? I know that it isn't what you are looking for."

It was not. I had given myself up to the idleness of a haunted man who looks for nothing but words wherein to capture his visions. But I admit that outwardly I resembled sufficiently a man who could make a second officer for a steamer chartered by a French company. I showed no sign of being haunted by the fate of Nina and by the murmurs of tropical forests; and even my intimate intercourse with Almayer (a person of weak character) had not put a visible mark upon my features. For many years he and the world of his story had been the companions of my imagination without, I hope, impairing my ability to deal with the realities of sea life. I had had the man and his surroundings with me ever since my return from the eastern waters—some four years before the day of which I speak.

It was in the front sitting-room of furnished apartments in a Pimlico square that they first began to live again with a vividness and poignancy quite foreign to our former real intercourse. I had been treating myself to a long stay on shore, and in the necessity of occupying my mornings Almayer (that old acquaintance) came nobly to the rescue. Before long, as was only proper, his wife and daughter joined him round my table, and then the rest of that Pantai band came full of words and gestures. Unknown to my respectable landlady, it was my practice directly after my breakfast to hold animated receptions of Malays, Arabs, and half-castes. They did not clamour aloud for my attention. They came with a silent

and irresistible appeal—and the appeal, I affirm here, was not to my self-love or my vanity. It seems now to have had a moral character, for why should the memory of these beings, seen in their obscure, sun-bathed existence, demand to express itself in the shape of a novel, except on the ground of that mysterious fellowship which unites in a community of hopes and fears all the dwellers on this earth?

I did not receive my visitors with boisterous rapture as the bearers of any gifts of profit or fame. There was no vision of a printed book before me as I sat writing at that table, situated in a decayed part of Belgravia. After all these years, each leaving its evidence of slowly blackened pages, I can honestly say that it is a sentiment akin to pity which prompted me to render in words assembled with conscientious care the memory of things far distant and of men who had lived.

But, coming back to Captain Froud and his fixed idea of never disappointing ship-owners or ship-captains, it was not likely that I should fail him in his ambition—to satisfy at a few hours' notice the unusual demand for a French-speaking officer. He explained to me that the ship was chartered by a French company intending to establish a regular monthly line of sailings from Rouen, for the transport of French emigrants to Canada. But, frankly, this sort of thing did not interest me very much. I said gravely that if it were really a matter of keeping up the reputation of the Shipmasters' Society I would consider it.

But the consideration was just for form's sake. The next day I interviewed the captain, and I believe we were impressed favourably with each other. He explained that his chief mate was an excellent man in every respect and that he could not think of dismissing him so as to give me the higher position; but that if I consented to come as second officer I would be given certain special advantages—and so on.

I told him that if I came at all the rank really did not matter.

"I am sure," he insisted, "you will get on first rate with Mr. Paramor."

I promised faithfully to stay for two trips at least, and it was in those circumstances that what was to be my last connection with a ship began. And after all there was not even one single trip. It may be that it was simply the fulfilment of a fate, of that written word on my forehead which apparently forbade me, through all my sea wanderings, ever to achieve the crossing of the Western Ocean—using the words in that special sense in which sailors speak of Western Ocean trade, of Western Ocean packets, of Western Ocean hard cases. The new life attended closely upon the old, and the nine chapters of "Almayer's Folly" went with me to the Victoria Dock, whence in a few days we started for Rouen. I won't go so far as saying that the engaging of a man fated never to cross the Western Ocean was the absolute cause of the Franco-Canadian Transport Company's failure to achieve even a single passage.

It might have been that of course; but the obvious gross obstacle was clearly the want of money. Four hundred and sixty bunks for emigrants were put together in the 'tween decks by industrious carpenters while we lay in the Victoria Dock, but never an emigrant turned up in Rouen—of which, being a humane person, I confess I was glad. Some gentlemen from Paris—I think there were three of them, and one was said to be the chairman—turned up, indeed, and went from end to end of the ship, knocking their silk hats cruelly against the deck beams. I attended them personally, and I can vouch for it that the interest they took in things was intelligent enough, though, obviously, they had never seen anything of the sort before. Their faces as they went ashore wore a cheerfully inconclusive expression. Notwithstanding that this inspecting ceremony was supposed to be a preliminary to immediate sailing, it was then, as they filed down our gangway, that I received the inward monition that no sailing within the meaning of our charter party would ever take place.

It must be said that in less than three weeks a move took place. When we first arrived we had been taken up with much ceremony well toward the centre of the town, and, all the street corners being placarded with the tricolor posters announcing the birth of our company, the *petit bourgeois* with his wife and family made a Sunday holiday from the inspection of the ship. I was always in evidence in my best uniform to give

information as though I had been a Cook's tourists' interpreter, while our quartermasters reaped a harvest of small change from personally conducted parties. But when the move was made—that move which carried us some mile and a half down the stream to be tied up to an altogether muddier and shabbier quay—then indeed the desolation of solitude became our lot. It was a complete and soundless stagnation; for as we had the ship ready for sea to the smallest detail, as the frost was hard and the days short, we were absolutely idle—idle to the point of blushing with shame when the thought struck us that all the time our salaries went on. Young Cole was aggrieved because, as he said, we could not enjoy any sort of fun in the evening after loafing like this all day: even the banjo lost its charm since there was nothing to prevent his strumming on it all the time between the meals. The good Paramor—he was really a most excellent fellow—became unhappy as far as was possible to his cheery nature, till one dreary day I suggested, out of sheer mischief, that he should employ the dormant energies of the crew in hauling both cables up on deck and turning them end for end.

For a moment Mr. Paramor was radiant. "Excellent idea!" but directly his face fell. "Why. . . Yes! But we can't make that job last more than three days," he muttered discontentedly. I don't know how long he expected us to be stuck on the riverside outskirts of Rouen, but I know that the cables got hauled up and

turned end for end according to my satanic suggestion, put down again, and their very existence utterly forgotten, I believe, before a French river pilot came on board to take our ship down, empty as she came, into the Havre roads. You may think that this state of forced idleness favoured some advance in the fortunes of Almayer and his daughter. Yet it was not so. As if it were some sort of evil spell, my banjoist cabin-mate's interruption, as related above, had arrested them short at the point of that fateful sunset for many weeks together. It was always thus with this book, begun in '89 and finished in '94—with that shortest of all the novels which it was to be my lot to write. Between its opening exclamation calling Almayer to his dinner in his wife's voice and Abdullah's (his enemy) mental reference to the God of Islam—"The Merciful, the Compassionate"—which closes the book, there were to come several long sea passages, a visit (to use the elevated phraseology suitable to the occasion) to the scenes (some of them) of my childhood and the realization of childhood's vain words, expressing a light-hearted and romantic whim.

It was in 1868, when nine years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of that continent, I said to myself, with absolute assurance and an amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now:

"When I grow up I shall go *there*."

And of course I thought no more about it till after a quarter of a century or so an opportunity offered to go there—as if the sin of childish audacity were to be visited on my mature head. Yes. I did go there: *there* being the region of Stanley Falls, which in '68 was the blankest of blank spaces on the earth's figured surface. And the MS. of "Almayer's Folly," carried about me as if it were a talisman or a treasure, went *there*, too. That it ever came out of *there* seems a special dispensation of Providence, because a good many of my other properties, infinitely more valuable and useful to me, remained behind through unfortunate accidents of transportation. I call to mind, for instance, a specially awkward turn of the Congo between Kinchassa and Leopoldsville—more particularly when one had to take it at night in a big canoe with only half the proper number of paddlers. I failed in being the second white man on record drowned at that interesting spot through the upsetting of a canoe. The first was a young Belgian officer, but the accident happened some months before my time, and he, too, I believe, was going home; not perhaps quite so ill as myself—but still he was going home. I got round the turn more or less alive, though I was too sick to care whether I did or not, and, always with "Almayer's Folly" among my diminishing baggage, I arrived at that delectable capital, Boma, where, before the departure of the steamer which was to take me home, I had the time to wish myself dead over and over again with perfect sincerity. At that date there were

in existence only seven chapters of "Almayer's Folly," but the chapter in my history which followed was that of a long, long illness and very dismal convalescence. Geneva, or more precisely the hydropathic establishment of Champel, is rendered forever famous by the termination of the eighth chapter in the history of Almayer's decline and fall. The events of the ninth are inextricably mixed up with the details of the proper management of a waterside warehouse owned by a certain city firm whose name does not matter. But that work, undertaken to accustom myself again to the activities of a healthy existence, soon came to an end. The earth had nothing to hold me with for very long. And then that memorable story, like a cask of choice Madeira, got carried for three years to and fro upon the sea. Whether this treatment improved its flavour or not, of course I would not like to say. As far as appearance is concerned it certainly did nothing of the kind. The whole MS. acquired a faded look and an ancient, yellowish complexion. It became at last unreasonable to suppose that anything in the world would ever happen to Almayer and Nina. And yet something most unlikely to happen on the high seas was to wake them up from their state of suspended animation.

What is it that Novalis says: "It is certain my conviction gains infinitely the moment another soul will believe in it." And what is a novel if not a conviction of our fellow-men's existence strong enough to take upon itself a form of im-

agined life clearer than reality and whose accumulated verisimilitude of selected episodes puts to shame the pride of documentary history. Providence which saved my MS. from the Congo rapids brought it to the knowledge of a helpful soul far out on the open sea. It would be on my part the greatest ingratitude ever to forget the sallow, sunken face and the deep-set, dark eyes of the young Cambridge man (he was a "passenger for his health" on board the good ship *Torrens* outward bound to Australia) who was the first reader of "Almayer's Folly"—the very first reader I ever had. "Would it bore you very much in reading a MS. in a handwriting like mine?" I asked him one evening, on a sudden impulse at the end of a longish conversation whose subject was Gibbon's History. Jacques (that was his name) was sitting in my cabin one stormy dog-watch below, after bringing me a book to read from his own travelling store.

"Not at all," he answered, with his courteous intonation and a faint smile. As I pulled a drawer open his suddenly aroused curiosity gave him a watchful expression. I wonder what he expected to see. A poem, maybe. All that's beyond guessing now. He was not a cold, but a calm man, still more subdued by disease—a man of few words and of an unassuming modesty in general intercourse, but with something uncommon in the whole of his person which set him apart from the undistinguished lot of our sixty passengers. His eyes had a thoughtful, intro-

spective look. In his attractive reserved manner and in a veiled sympathetic voice he asked: "What is this?" "It is a sort of tale," I answered, with an effort. "It is not even finished yet. Nevertheless, I would like to know what you think of it." He put the MS. in the breast-pocket of his jacket; I remember perfectly his thin, brown fingers folding it lengthwise. "I will read it to-morrow," he remarked, seizing the door-handle; and then watching the roll of the ship for a propitious moment, he opened the door and was gone. In the moment of his exit I heard the sustained booming of the wind, the swish of the water on the decks of the *Torrens*, and the subdued, as if distant, roar of the rising sea. I noted the growing disquiet in the great restlessness of the ocean, and responded professionally to it with the thought that at eight o'clock, in another half-hour or so at the farthest, the topgallantsails would have to come off the ship.

Next day, but this time in the first dog-watch, Jacques entered my cabin. He had a thick woollen muffler round his throat, and the MS. was in his hand. He tendered it to me with a steady look, but without a word. I took it in silence. He sat down on the couch and still said nothing. I opened and shut a drawer under my desk, on which a filled-up log-slate lay wide open in its wooden frame waiting to be copied neatly into the sort of book I was accustomed to write with care, the ship's log-book. I turned my back squarely on the desk. And even then Jacques never of-

fered a word. "Well, what do you say?" I asked at last. "Is it worth finishing?" This question expressed exactly the whole of my thoughts.

"Distinctly," he answered, in his sedate, veiled voice, and then coughed a little.

"Were you interested?" I inquired further, almost in a whisper.

"Very much!"

In a pause I went on meeting instinctively the heavy rolling of the ship, and Jacques put his feet upon the couch. The curtain of my bed-place swung to and fro as if it were a punkah, the bulkhead lamp circled in its gimbals, and now and then the cabin door rattled slightly in the gusts of wind. It was in latitude 40 south, and nearly in the longitude of Greenwich, as far as I can remember, that these quiet rites of Almayer's and Nina's resurrection were taking place. In the prolonged silence it occurred to me that there was a good deal of retrospective writing in the story as far as it went. Was it intelligible in its action, I asked myself, as if already the story-teller were being born into the body of a seaman. But I heard on deck the whistle of the officer of the watch and remained on the alert to catch the order that was to follow this call to attention. It reached me as a faint, fierce shout to "Square the yards." "Aha!" I thought to myself, "a westerly blow coming on." Then I turned to my very first reader, who, alas! was not to live long enough to know the end of the tale.

"Now let me ask you one more thing: is the story quite clear to you as it stands?"

He raised his dark, gentle eyes to my face and seemed surprised. "Yes! Perfectly."

This was all I was to hear from his lips concerning the merits of "Almayer's Folly." We never spoke together of the book again. A long period of bad weather set in and I had no thoughts left but for my duties, while poor Jacques caught a fatal cold and had to keep close in his cabin. When we arrived in Adelaide the first reader of my prose went at once up-country, and died rather suddenly in the end, either in Australia or it may be on the passage while going home through the Suez Canal. I am not sure which it was now, and I do not think I ever heard precisely; though I made inquiries about him. . . . At last we sailed, homeward bound, and still not one line was added to the careless scrawl of the many pages which poor Jacques had had the patience to read with the very shadows of Eternity gathering already in the hollows of his kind, steadfast eyes.

The purpose instilled into me by his simple and final "Distinctly" remained dormant, yet alive to await its opportunity. I dare say I am compelled—unconsciously compelled—now to write volume after volume, as in past years I was compelled to go to sea voyage after voyage. Leaves must follow upon one another as leagues used to follow in the days gone by, on and on to the appointed end, which, being Truth itself, is One—one for all men and for all occupations.

HELEN KELLER

"One brief spring, musical with the song of robin and mockingbird, one summer rich in fruit and roses, one autumn of gold and crimson sped by and left their gifts at the feet of an eager, delighted child." Then with fearful swiftness a terrible disease swooped down and snatched away sight, hearing, and the power of speech, and left a lonely little girl groping hungrily for something that had passed away. Six heartbreaking years during which those who loved her had to watch her suffer, unable to help, and there dawned on the little Alabama town a wonderful day, the most wonderful day, according to her account, that had ever come into her life, for that was the day on which Anne Mansfield Sullivan came to Helen Keller. What fun those two had together! And what struggles! What scrapes they got into! It is all in this little volume ("The Story of My Life")—from the story of how Helen upset the dignity of a staid body of presbyters to the story of how she learned her first word—there was one word which she remembered from the first nineteen months of her life but you would never guess what it was—of her early consciousness of love, beauty, and God, of her first swim in the ocean, her first visit to Niagara, of her experience up a tree during a storm—she was up a tree in two senses of the word then—and of the many, many elements which were working together to make her, as Mark Twain once said, one of the two most remarkable characters of the nineteenth century. (The other was Napoleon.)

The story is simply told with the naïve charm of a young girl—Helen was hardly more than twenty when she wrote it. There will never be another book like it—at least not until our civilization is blotted out and another has been established—for while there may be blind children of equal gifts they will all have the benefit of the teaching of Miss Sullivan. Only once in a great while are such teachers born, and more rarely still are they given perfect freedom to do as they list with their pupils. When Ellen Terry kissed her she said, "I don't know whether I am glad to see you or not; for I feel so ashamed of myself when

I think of how much you have done for the little girl." Helen Keller's narrative is supplemented with the letters of Miss Sullivan and with an editorial sketch by Mr. John Albert Macy, the well-known editor and author.

The following pages are from Miss Keller's book, "The Story of My Life," published by Doubleday, Page & Co.:

*THE GREAT DAY

THE most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrast between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old.

On the afternoon of that eventful day, I stood on the porch, dumb, expectant. I guessed vaguely from my mother's signs and from the hurrying to and fro in the house that something unusual was about to happen, so I went to the door and waited on the steps. The afternoon sun penetrated the mass of honeysuckle that covered the porch, and fell on my upturned face. My fingers lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. I did not know what the future held of marvel or surprise for me. Anger and bitterness had preyed upon me continually for weeks and a deep languor had succeeded this passionate struggle.

Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when

(*From "The Story of My Life", published by Doubleday, Page and Co. Copyright 1902, 1903, 1905, by Helen Keller.

it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbour was. "Light! give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed to my mother. Some one took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all things else, to love me.

The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word "d-o-l-l." I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for *doll*. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them *pin*, *hat*,

cup and a few verbs like *sit, stand,* and *walk.* But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled "d-o-l-l" and tried to make me understand that "d-o-l-l" applied to both. Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the words "m-u-g" and "w-a-t-e-r." Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that "m-u-g" is *mug* and that "w-a-t-e-r" is *water,* but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passionate outburst. I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong sentiment or tenderness. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed. She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the

spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water* first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.

I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me. On entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them together. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realized what I had done, and for the first time I felt repentance and sorrow.

I learned a great many new words that day. . . . It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed for a new day to come.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

[Booker T. Washington used to say that a man's success in life should be measured by the distance he climbs from the point at which he started. Measured by this standard few men were ever more successful than Booker T. Washington himself. He started life as a slave boy on a Virginia plantation and ended it as the head of a great educational institution and the leader of his race in America.

Theodore Roosevelt said of him: "For twenty years before his death he had been the most useful, as well as the most distinguished, member of his race in the world, and one of the most useful, as well as one of the most distinguished, of American citizens of any race."

He was born just before the opening of the Civil War. He was one of the slaves who were liberated by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. He worked in a coal mine in West Virginia at the age of ten. A few years later he made his way on foot to Hampton Institute where he worked his way through the entire course and on graduation was placed on the teaching staff. Shortly thereafter he founded Tuskegee Institute in the Black Belt of Alabama and built it up from literally nothing to be the largest industrial school for Negroes in the world and one of the largest and most successful institutions of its kind in the world for any race. Fourteen years later, in 1895, he represented his race at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia, and there made a speech which raised him at once to the position of race leadership which he held in an ever increasing degree until his death in 1915.

His autobiography, "Up From Slavery," published in 1901, soon assumed and will always hold its place among the really great biographical literature of our language. From it, the pages which follow are reprinted. The events of the last fifteen years of his life are told in "Booker T. Washington: Builder of a Civilization," written by Emmett J. Scott, for eighteen years his secretary, and Lyman Beecher Stowe. Both books, as well as the other works of Booker T. Washington, are published by Doubleday, Page & Company.]

Booker T. Washington

A SLAVE AMONG SLAVES*

I WAS born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post-office called Hale's Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the coloured people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother's side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been un-

*From "Up from Slavery—an Autobiography." Copyright, 1901, by Doubleday, Page and Company, .

successful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family record—that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the near-by plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at that time.

The cabin was not only our living-place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in

the lower right-hand corner of the room, the "cat-hole,"—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The "cat-hole" was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my memory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and "skillets." While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fireplace in summer was equally trying.

The early years of my life, which were spent in the little cabin, were not very different from those of thousands of other slaves. My mother, of course, had little time in which to give attention to

the training of her children during the day. She snatched a few moments for our care in the early morning before her work began, and at night after the day's work was done. One of my earliest recollections is that of my mother cooking a chicken late at night, and awakening her children for the purpose of feeding them. How or where she got it I do not know. I presume, however, it was procured from our owner's farm. Some people may call this theft. If such a thing were to happen now, I should condemn it as theft myself. But taking place at the time it did, and for the reason that it did, no one could ever make me believe that my mother was guilty of thieving. She was simply a victim of the system of slavery. I cannot remember having slept in a bed until after our family was declared free by the Emancipation Proclamation. Three children—John, my older brother, Amanda, my sister, and myself—had a pallet on the dirt floor, or, to be more correct, we slept in and on a bundle of filthy rags laid upon the dirt floor.

I was asked not long ago to tell something about the sports and pastimes that I engaged in during my youth. Until that question was asked it had never occurred to me that there was no period of my life that was devoted to play. From the time that I can remember anything, almost every day of my life has been occupied in some kind of labour; though I think I would now be a more useful man if I had had time for sports. During the period that I spent in slavery I was not large enough to

be of much service, still I was occupied most of the time in cleaning the yards, carrying water to the men in the fields, or going to the mill to which I used to take the corn, once a week, to be ground. The mill was about three miles from the plantation. This work I always dreaded. The heavy bag of corn would be thrown across the back of the horse, and the corn divided about evenly on each side; but in some way, almost without exception, on these trips, the corn would so shift as to become unbalanced and would fall off the horse, and often I would fall with it. As I was not strong enough to reload the corn upon the horse, I would have to wait, sometimes for many hours, till a chance passer-by came along who would help me out of my trouble. The hours while waiting for some one were usually spent in crying. The time consumed in this way made me late in reaching the mill, and by the time I got my corn ground and reached home it would be far into the night. The road was a lonely one, and often led through dense forests. I was always frightened. The woods were said to be full of soldiers who had deserted from the army, and I had been told that the first thing a deserter did to a Negro boy when he found him alone was to cut off his ears. Besides, when I was late in getting home I knew I would always get a severe scolding or a flogging.

I had no schooling whatever while I was a slave though I remember on several occasions I went as far as the schoolhouse door with one of my young mistresses to carry her books. The picture of

several dozen boys and girls in a schoolroom engaged in study made a deep impression upon me, and I had the feeling that to get into a schoolhouse and study in this way would be about the same as getting into paradise.

So far as I can now recall, the first knowledge that I got of the fact that we were slaves, and that freedom of the slaves was being discussed, was early one morning before day, when I was awakened by my mother kneeling over her children and fervently praying that Lincoln and his armies might be successful, and that one day she and her children might be free. In this connection I have never been able to understand how the slaves throughout the South, completely ignorant as were the masses so far as books or newspapers were concerned, were able to keep themselves so accurately and completely informed about the great national questions that were agitating the country. From the time that Garrison, Lovejoy, and others began to agitate for freedom, the slaves throughout the South kept in close touch with the progress of the movement. Though I was a mere child during the preparation for the Civil War and during the war itself, I now recall the many late-at-night whispered discussions that I heard my mother and the other slaves on the plantation indulge in. These discussions showed that they understood the situation, and that they kept themselves informed of events by what was termed the "grape-vine" telegraph.

During the campaign when Lincoln was first a

candidate for the Presidency, the slaves on our far-off plantation, miles from any railroad or large city or daily newspaper, knew what the issues involved were. When war was begun between the North and the South, every slave on our plantation felt and knew that, though other issues were discussed, the primal one was that of slavery. Even the most ignorant members of my race on the remote plantations felt in their hearts, with a certainty that admitted of no doubt, that the freedom of the slaves would be the one great result of the war, if the Northern armies conquered. Every success of the Federal armies and every defeat of the Confederate forces was watched with the keenest and most intense interest. Often the slaves got knowledge of the results of great battles before the white people received it. This news was usually gotten from the coloured man who was sent to the post-office for the mail. In our case the post-office was about three miles from the plantation, and the mail came once or twice a week. The man who was sent to the office would linger about the place long enough to get the drift of the conversation from the group of white people who naturally congregated there, after receiving their mail, to discuss the latest news. The mail-carrier on his way back to our master's house would as naturally retail the news that he had secured among the slaves, and in this way they often heard of important events before the white people at the "big house," as the master's house was called.

I cannot remember a single instance during my

childhood or early boyhood when our entire family sat down to the table together, and God's blessing was asked, and the family ate a meal in a civilized manner. On the plantation in Virginia, and even later, meals were gotten by the children very much as dumb animals get theirs. It was a piece of bread here and a scrap of meat there. It was a cup of milk at one time and some potatoes at another. Sometimes a portion of our family would eat out of the skillet or pot, while some one else would eat from a tin plate held on the knees, and often using nothing but the hands with which to hold the food. When I had grown to sufficient size, I was required to go to the "big house" at meal-times to fan the flies from the table by means of a large set of paper fans operated by a pulley. Naturally much of the conversation of the white people turned upon the subject of freedom and the war, and I absorbed a good deal of it. I remember that at one time I saw two of my young mistresses and some lady visitors eating ginger-cakes in the yard. At that time those cakes seemed to me to be absolutely the most tempting and desirable things that I had ever seen; and I then and there resolved that, if I ever got free, the height of my ambition would be reached if I could get to the point where I could secure and eat ginger-cakes in the way that I saw those ladies doing.

Of course as the war was prolonged the white people, in many cases, often found it difficult to secure food for themselves. I think the slaves felt the deprivation less than the whites, because

the usual diet for the slaves was corn bread and pork, and these could be raised on the plantation; but coffee, tea, sugar, and other articles which the whites had been accustomed to use could not be raised on the plantation, and the conditions brought about by the war frequently made it impossible to secure these things. The whites were often in great straits. Parched corn was used for coffee, and a kind of black molasses was used instead of sugar. Many times nothing was used to sweeten the so-called tea and coffee.

The first pair of shoes that I recall wearing were wooden ones. They had rough leather on the top, but the bottoms, which were about an inch thick, were of wood. When I walked they made a fearful noise, and besides this they were very inconvenient, since there was no yielding to the natural pressure of the foot. In wearing them one presented an exceedingly awkward appearance. The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy, however, was the wearing of a flax shirt. In the portion of Virginia where I lived it was common to use flax as part of the clothing for the slaves. That part of the flax from which our clothing was made was largely the refuse, which of course was the cheapest and roughest part. I can scarcely imagine any torture, except, perhaps, the pulling of a tooth, th t is equal to that caused by putting on a new flax shirt for the first time. It is almost equal to the feeling that one would experience if he had a dozen or more chestnut burrs, or a hundred small pin-points, in contact with his

flesh. Even to this day I can recall accurately the tortures that I underwent when putting on one of these garments. The fact that my flesh was soft and tender added to the pain. But I had no choice. I had to wear the flax shirt or none; and had it been left to me to choose, I should have chosen to wear no covering. In connection with the flax shirt, my brother John, who is several years older than I am, performed one of the most generous acts that I ever heard of one slave relative doing for another. On several occasions when I was being forced to wear a new flax shirt, he generously agreed to put it on in my stead and wear it for several days, till it was "broken in." Until I had grown to be quite a youth this single garment was all that I wore.

One may get the idea, from what I have said, that there was bitter feeling toward the white people on the part of my race, because of the fact that most of the white population was away fighting in a war which would result in keeping the Negro in slavery if the South was successful. In the case of the slaves on our place this was not true, and it was not true of any large portion of the slave population in the South where the Negro was treated with anything like decency. During the Civil War one of my young masters was killed, and two were severely wounded. I recall the feeling of sorrow which existed among the slaves when they heard of the death of "Mars' Billy." It was no sham sorrow but real. Some of the slaves had nursed "Mars' Billy"; others had played with him

when he was a child. "Mars' Billy" had begged for mercy in the case of others when the overseer or master was thrashing them. The sorrow in the slave quarter was only second to that in the "big house." When the two young masters were brought home wounded, the sympathy of the slaves was shown in many ways. They were just as anxious to assist in the nursing as the family relatives of the wounded. Some of the slaves would even beg for the privilege of sitting up at night to nurse their wounded masters. This tenderness and sympathy on the part of those held in bondage was a result of their kindly and generous nature. In order to defend and protect the women and children who were left on the plantations when the white males went to war, the slaves would have laid down their lives. The slave who was selected to sleep in the "big house" during the absence of the males was considered to have the place of honour. Any one attempting to harm "young Mistress" or "old Mistress" during the night would have had to cross the dead body of the slave to do so. I do not know how many have noticed it, but I think that it will be found to be true that there are few instances, either in slavery or freedom, in which a member of my race has been known to betray a specific trust.

As a rule, not only did the members of my race entertain no feelings of bitterness against the whites before and during the war, but there are many instances of Negroes tenderly caring for their former masters and mistresses who for some reason

have become poor and dependent since the war. I know of instances where the former masters of slaves have for years been supplied with the money by their former slaves to keep them from suffering. I have known of still other cases in which the former slaves have assisted in the education of the descendants of their former owners. I know of a case on a large plantation in the South in which a young white man, the son of the former owner of the estate, has become so reduced in purse and self-control by reason of drink that he is a pitiable creature; and yet, notwithstanding the poverty of the coloured people themselves on this plantation, they have for years supplied this young white man with the necessities of life. One sends him a little coffee or sugar, another a little meat, and so on. Nothing that the coloured people possess is too good for the son of "old Mars' Tom," who will perhaps never be permitted to suffer while any remain on the place who knew directly or indirectly of "old Mars' Tom." . . .

From some things that I have said one may get the idea that some of the slaves did not want freedom. This is not true. I have never seen one who did not want to be free, or one who would return to slavery.

I pity from the bottom of my heart any nation or body of people that is so unfortunate as to get entangled in the net of slavery. I have long since ceased to cherish any spirit of bitterness against the Southern white people on account of the enslave-

ment of my race. No one section of our country was wholly responsible for its introduction, and, besides, it was recognized and protected for years by the General Government. Having once got its tentacles fastened on to the economic and social life of the Republic, it was no easy matter for the country to relieve itself of the institution. Then, when we rid ourselves of prejudice, or racial feeling, and look facts in the face, we must acknowledge that, notwithstanding the cruelty and moral wrong of slavery, the ten million Negroes inhabiting this country, who themselves or whose ancestors went through the school of American slavery, are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe. This is so to such an extent that Negroes in this country, who themselves or whose forefathers went through the school of slavery, are constantly returning to Africa as missionaries to enlighten those who remained in the fatherland. This I say, not to justify slavery—on the other hand, I condemn it as an institution, as we all know that in America it was established for selfish and financial reasons, and not from a missionary motive—but to call attention to a fact, and to show how Providence so often uses men and institutions to accomplish a purpose. When persons ask me in these days how, in the midst of what sometimes seem hopelessly discouraging conditions, I can have such faith in the future of my race in this country, I remind them of the wilder-

ness through which and out of which a good Providence has already led us.

Ever since I have been old enough to think for myself, I have entertained the idea that, notwithstanding the cruel wrongs inflicted upon us, the black man got nearly as much out of slavery as the white man did. The hurtful influences of the institution were not by any means confined to the Negro. This was fully illustrated by the life upon our own plantation. The whole machinery of slavery was so constructed as to cause labour, as a rule, to be looked upon as a badge of degradation, of inferiority. Hence labour was something that both races on the slave plantation sought to escape. The slave system on our place, in a large measure, took the spirit of self-reliance and self-help out of the white people. My old master had many boys and girls, but not one, so far as I know, ever mastered a single trade or special line of productive industry. The girls were not taught to cook, sew, or to take care of the house. All of this was left to the slaves. The slaves, of course, had little personal interest in the life of the plantation, and their ignorance prevented them from learning how to do things in the most improved and thorough manner. As a result of the system, fences were out of repair, gates were hanging half off the hinges, doors creaked, window-panes were out, plastering had fallen but was not replaced, weeds grew in the yard. As a rule, there was food for whites and blacks, but inside the house, and on the dining-room table, there was wanting that delicacy and

refinement of touch and finish which can make a home the most convenient, comfortable, and attractive place in the world. Withal there was a waste of food and other materials which was sad. When freedom came, the slaves were almost as well fitted to begin life as the master, except in the matter of book-learning and ownership of property. The slave owner and his sons had mastered no special industry. They unconsciously had imbibed the feeling that manual labour was not the proper thing for them. On the other hand, the slaves, in many cases, had mastered some handicraft, and none were ashamed, and few unwilling, to labour.

Finally the war closed, and the day of freedom came. It was a momentous and eventful day to all upon our plantation. We had been expecting it. Freedom was in the air, and had been for months. Deserting soldiers returning to their homes were to be seen every day. Others who had been discharged, or whose regiments had been paroled, were constantly passing near our place. The "grape-vine telegraph" was kept busy night and day. The news and mutterings of great events were swiftly carried from one plantation to another. In the fear of "Yankee" invasions, the silverware and other valuables were taken from the "big house," buried in the woods, and guarded by trusted slaves. Woe be to any one who would have attempted to disturb the buried treasure. The slaves would give the Yankee soldiers food, drink, clothing—anything but that which had been specifically intrusted to their care and honour. As

the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom. True, they had sung those same verses before, but they had been careful to explain that the "freedom" in these songs referred to the next world, and had no connection with life in this world. Now they gradually threw off the mask, and were not afraid to let it be known that the "freedom" in their songs meant freedom of the body in this world. The night before the eventful day, word was sent to the slave quarters to the effect that something unusual was going to take place at the "big house" the next morning. There was little, if any, sleep that night. All was excitement and expectancy. Early the next morning word was sent to all the slaves, old and young, to gather at the house. In company with my mother, brother, and sister and a large number of other slaves, I went to the master's house. All of our master's family were either standing or seated on the veranda of the house, where they could see what was to take place and hear what was said. There was a feeling of deep interest, or perhaps sadness, on their faces, but not bitterness. As I now recall the impression they made upon me, they did not at the moment seem to be sad because of the loss of property, but rather because of parting with those whom they had reared and who were in many ways very close to them. The most distinct thing that I now recall in connection with the

scene was that some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper—the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see.

For some minutes there was great rejoicing, and thanksgiving, and wild scenes of ecstasy. But there was no feeling of bitterness. In fact, there was pity among the slaves for our former owners. The wild rejoicing on the part of the emancipated coloured people lasted but for a brief period, for I noticed that by the time they returned to their cabins there was a change in their feelings. The great responsibility of being free, of having charge of themselves, of having to think and plan for themselves and their children, seemed to take possession of them. It was very much like suddenly turning a youth of ten or twelve years out into the world to provide for himself. In a few hours the great questions with which the Anglo-Saxon race had been grappling for centuries had been thrown upon these people to be solved. These were the questions of a home, a living, the rearing of children, education, citizenship, and the establishment and support of churches. Was it any wonder that

within a few hours the wild rejoicing ceased and a feeling of deep gloom seemed to pervade the slave quarters? To some it seemed that, now that they were in actual possession of it, freedom was a more serious thing than they had expected to find it. Some of the slaves were seventy or eighty years old; their best days were gone. They had no strength with which to earn a living in a strange place and among strange people, even if they had been sure where to find a new place of abode. To this class the problem seemed especially hard. Besides, deep down in their hearts there was a strange and peculiar attachment to "old Marster" and "old Missus," and to their children, which they found it hard to think of breaking off. With these they had spent in some cases nearly a half-century, and it was no light thing to think of parting. Gradually, one by one, stealthily at first, the older slaves began to wander from the slave quarters back to the "big house" to have a whispered conversation with their former owners as to the future.

THE
POCKET UNIVERSITY

VOLUME XVII PART II

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ACTORS

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GEORGE ILES

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ACTORS

JOSEPH JEFFERSON

[William Winter, the dramatic critic of the New York *Tribune*, in 1894 wrote the "Life and Art of Joseph Jefferson," published by the Macmillan Company, London and New York.

He gives an account of Jefferson's lineage, and then says:

"In Joseph Jefferson, fourth of the line, famous as Rip Van Winkle, and destined to be long remembered by that name in dramatic history, there is an obvious union of the salient qualities of his ancestors. The rustic luxuriance, manly vigour, careless and adventurous disposition of the first Jefferson; the refined intellect, delicate sensibility, dry humour, and gentle tenderness of the second; and the amiable, philosophic, and drifting temperament of the third, reappear in this descendant. But more than any of his ancestors, and more than most of his contemporaries, the present Jefferson is an originator in the art of acting. . . . Joseph Jefferson is as distinct as Lamb among essayists, or George Darley among lyrical poets. No actor of the past prefigured him, . . . and no name, in the teeming annals of modern art, has shone with a more tranquil lustre, or can be more confidently committed to the esteem of posterity."

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HOW I CAME TO PLAY RIP VAN WINKLE

THE hope of entering the race for dramatic fame as an individual and single attraction never came into my head until, in 1858, I acted Asa Trenchard in "Our American Cousin"; but as the curtain descended the first night on that remarkably successful play, visions of large type,

foreign countries, and increased remuneration floated before me, and I resolved to be a star if I could. A resolution to this effect is easily made; its accomplishment is quite another matter.

Art has always been my sweetheart, and I have loved her for herself alone. I had fancied that our affection was mutual, so that when I failed as a star, which I certainly did, I thought she had jilted me. Not so. I wronged her. She only reminded me that I had taken too great a liberty, and that if I expected to win her I must press my suit with more patience. Checked, but undaunted in the resolve, my mind dwelt upon my vision, and I still indulged in day-dreams of the future.

During these delightful reveries it came up before me that in acting Asa Trenchard I had, for the first time in my life on the stage, spoken a pathetic speech; and though I did not look at the audience during the time I was acting — for that is dreadful — I felt that they both laughed and cried. I had before this often made my audience smile, but never until now had I moved them to tears. This to me novel accomplishment was delightful, and in casting about for a new character my mind was ever dwelling on reproducing an effect where humour would be so closely allied to pathos that smiles and tears should mingle with each other. Where could I get one? There had been many written, and as I looked back into the dramatic history of the

past a long line of lovely ghosts loomed up before me, passing as in a procession: Job Thornberry, Bob Tyke, Frank Ostland, Zekiel Homespun, and a host of departed heroes "with martial stalk went by my watch." Charming fellows all, but not for me. I felt I could not do them justice. Besides, they were too human. I was looking for a myth — something intangible and impossible. But he would not come. Time went on, and still with no result.

During the summer of 1859 I arranged to board with my family at a queer old Dutch farmhouse in Paradise Valley, at the foot of Pocono Mountain, in Pennsylvania. A ridge of hills covered with tall hemlocks surrounds the vale, and numerous trout-streams wind through the meadows and tumble over the rocks. Stray farms are scattered through the valley, and the few old Dutchmen and their families who till the soil were born upon it; there and only there they have ever lived. The valley harmonised with me and our resources. The scene was wild, the air was fresh, and the board was cheap. What could the light heart and purse of a poor actor ask for more than this?

On one of those long rainy days that always render the country so dull I had climbed to the loft of the barn, and lying upon the hay was reading that delightful book "The Life and Letters of Washington Irving." I had gotten well into the volume, and was much interested in it, when to my surprise I came

upon a passage which said that he had seen me at Laura Keene's theater as Goldfinch in Holcroft's comedy of "The Road to Ruin," and that I reminded him of my father "in look, gesture, size, and make." Till then I was not aware that he had ever seen me. I was comparatively obscure, and to find myself remembered and written of by such a man gave me a thrill of pleasure I can never forget. I put down the book, and lay there thinking how proud I was, and ought to be, at the revelation of this compliment. What an incentive to a youngster like me to go on.

And so I thought to myself, "Washington Irving, the author of 'The Sketch-Book,' in which is the quaint story of Rip Van Winkle." Rip Van Winkle! There was to me magic in the sound of the name as I repeated it. Why, was not this the very character I wanted? An American story by an American author was surely just the theme suited to an American actor.

In ten minutes I had gone to the house and returned to the barn with "The Sketch-Book." I had not read the story since I was a boy. I was disappointed with it; not as a story, of course, but the tale was purely a narrative. The theme was interesting, but not dramatic. The silver Hudson stretches out before you as you read, the quaint red roofs and queer gables of the old Dutch cottages stand out against the mist upon the mountains; but all this is descriptive. The character of Rip does

not speak ten lines. What could be done dramatically with so simple a sketch? How could it be turned into an effective play?

Three or four bad dramatisations of the story had already been acted, but without marked success. Yates of London had given one in which the hero dies, one had been acted by my father, one by Hackett, and another by Burke. Some of these versions I had remembered when I was a boy, and I should say that Burke's play and performance were the best, but nothing that I remembered gave me the slightest encouragement that I could get a good play out of any of the existing materials. Still I was so bent upon acting the part that I started for the city, and in less than a week, by industriously ransacking the theatrical wardrobe establishments for old leather and mildewed cloth and by personally superintending the making of the wigs, each article of my costume was completed; and all this, too, before I had written a line of the play or studied a word of the part.

This is working in an opposite direction from all the conventional methods in the study and elaboration of a dramatic character, and certainly not following the course I would advise any one to pursue. I merely mention the out-of-the-way, upside-down manner of going to work as an illustration of the impatience and enthusiasm with which I entered upon the task. I can only account for my getting the dress ready before I studied the part to the vain desire I

had of witnessing myself in the glass, decked out and equipped as the hero of the Catskills.

I got together the three old printed versions of the drama and the story itself. The plays were all in two acts. I thought it would be an improvement in the drama to arrange it in three, making the scene with the spectre crew an act by itself. This would separate the poetical from the domestic side of the story. But by far the most important alteration was in the interview with the spirits. In the old versions they spoke and sang. I remembered that the effect of this ghostly dialogue was dreadfully human, so I arranged that no voice but Rip's should be heard. This is the only act on the stage in which but one person speaks while all the others merely gesticulate, and I was quite sure that the silence of the crew would give a lonely and desolate character to the scene and add its to supernatural weirdness. By this means, too, a strong contrast with the single voice of Rip was obtained by the deathlike stillness of the "demons" as they glided about the stage in solemn silence. It required some thought to hit upon just the best questions that could be answered by a nod and shake of the head, and to arrange that at times even Rip should propound a query to himself and answer it; but I had availed myself of so much of the old material that in a few days after I had begun my work it was finished.

In the seclusion of the barn I studied and

rehearsed the part, and by the end of summer I was prepared to transplant it from the rustic realms of an old farmhouse to a cosmopolitan audience in the city of Washington, where I opened at Carusi's Hall under the management of John T. Raymond. I had gone over the play so thoroughly that each situation was fairly engraved on my mind. The rehearsals were therefore not tedious to the actors; no one was delayed that I might consider how he or she should be disposed in the scene. I had by repeated experiments so saturated myself with the action of the play that a few days seemed to perfect the rehearsals. I acted on these occasions with all the point and feeling that I could muster. This answered the double purpose of giving me freedom and of observing the effect of what I was doing on the actors. They seemed to be watching me closely, and I could tell by little nods of approval where and when the points hit.

I became each day more and more interested in the work; there was in the subject and the part much scope for novel and fanciful treatment. If the sleep of twenty years was merely incongruous, there would be room for argument pro and con; but as it is an impossibility, I felt that the audience would accept it at once, not because it was an impossibility, but from a desire to know in what condition a man's mind would be if such an event could happen. Would he be thus changed? His identity

being denied both by strangers, friends, and family, would he at last almost accept the verdict and exclaim, "Then I am dead, and that is a fact?" This was the strange and original attitude of the character that attracted me.

In acting such a part what to do was simple enough, but what not to do was the important and difficult point to determine. As the earlier scenes of the play were of a natural and domestic character, I had only to draw upon my experience for their effect, or employ such conventional methods as myself and others had used before in characters of that ilk. But from the moment Rip meets the spirits of Hendrik Hudson and his crew I felt that all colloquial dialogue and commonplace pantomime should cease. It is at this point in the story that the supernatural element begins, and henceforth the character must be raised from the domestic plane and lifted into the realms of the ideal.

To be brief, the play was acted with a result that was to me both satisfactory and disappointing. I was quite sure that the character was what I had been seeking, and I was equally satisfied that the play was not. The action had neither the body nor the strength to carry the hero; the spiritual quality was there, but the human interest was wanting. The final alterations and additions were made five years later by Dion Boucicault.

"Rip Van Winkle" was not a sudden suc-

cess. It did not burst upon the public like a torrent. Its flow was gradual, and its source sprang from the Hartz Mountains, an old German legend, called "Carl the Shepherd," being the name of the original story. The genius of Washington Irving transplanted the tale to our own Catskills. The grace with which he paints the scene, and, still more, the quaintness of the story, placed it far above the original. Yates, Hackett, and Burke had separate dramas written upon this scene and acted the hero, leaving their traditions one to the other. I now came forth, and saying, "Give me leave," set to work, using some of the before-mentioned tradition, mark you. Added to this, Dion Boucicault brought his dramatic skill to bear, and by important additions made a better play and a more interesting character of the hero than had as yet been reached. This adaptation, in my turn, I interpreted and enlarged upon. It is thus evident that while I may have done much to render the character and the play popular, it has not been the work of one mind, but both as its to narrative and its dramatic form has been often moulded, and by many skilful hands. So it would seem that those dramatic successes that "come like shadows, so depart," and those that are lasting have ability for their foundation and industry for their superstructure. I speak now of the former and the present condition of the drama. What the future may bring forth it is difficult to

determine. The histrionic kaleidoscope revolves more rapidly than of yore and the fantastic shapes that it exhibits are brilliant and confusing; but under all circumstances I should be loath to believe that any conditions will render the appearance of frivolous novices more potent than the earnest design of legitimate professors.

The Art of Acting

Acting has been so much a part of my life that my autobiography could scarcely be written without jotting down my reflections upon it, and I merely make this little preparatory explanation to apologise for any dogmatic tone that they may possess, and to say that I present them merely as a seeker after truth in the domain of art.

In admitting the analogy that undoubtedly exists between the arts of painting, poetry, music, and acting, it should be remembered that the first three are opposed to the last, in at least the one quality of permanence. The picture, oratorio, or book must bear the test of calculating criticism, whereas the work of an actor is fleeting: it not only dies with him, but, through his different moods, may vary from night to night. If the performance be indifferent it is no consolation for the audience to hear that the player acted well last night, or to be told that he will act better to-morrow night; it is this night that the public has to deal with, and the impression the actor has made, good or bad, remains as such upon the mind of that particular audience.

The author, painter, or musician, if he be dissatisfied with his work, may alter and perfect it before giving it publicity, but an actor cannot rub out; he ought, therefore, in justice to his audience, to be sure of what he is going to place before it. Should a picture in an art gallery be carelessly painted we can pass on to another, or if a book fails to please us we can put it down. An escape from this kind of dulness is easily made, but in a theatre the auditor is imprisoned. If the acting be indifferent, he must endure it, at least for a time. He cannot withdraw without making himself conspicuous; so he remains, hoping that there may be some improvement as the play proceeds, or perhaps from consideration for the company he is in. It is this helpless condition that renders careless acting so offensive.

Preparation and Inspiration

I have seen impulsive actors who were so confident of their power that they left all to chance. This is a dangerous course, especially when acting a new character. I will admit that there are many instances where great effects have been produced that were entirely spontaneous, and were as much a surprise to the actors who made them as they were to the audience who witnessed them; but just as individuals who have exuberant spirits are at times dreadfully depressed, so when an impulsive actor fails to receive his inspiration he is

dull indeed, and is the more disappointing because of his former brilliant achievements.

In the stage management of a play, or in the acting of a part, nothing should be left to chance, and for the reason that spontaneity, inspiration, or whatever the strange and delightful quality may be called, is not to be commanded, or we should give it some other name. It is, therefore, better that a clear and unmistakable outline of a character should be drawn before an actor undertakes a new part. If he has a well-ordered and an artistic mind it is likely that he will give at least a symmetrical and effective performance; but should he make no definite arrangement, and depend upon our ghostly friends Spontaneity and Inspiration to pay him a visit, and should they decline to call, the actor will be in a maze and his audience in a muddle.

Besides, why not prepare to receive our mysterious friends whether they come or not? If they fail on such an invitation, we can at least entertain our other guests without them, and if they do appear, our preconceived arrangements will give them a better welcome and put them more at ease.

Acting under these purely artificial conditions will necessarily be cold, but the care with which the part is given will at least render it inoffensive; they are, therefore, primary considerations, and not to be despised. The exhibition, however, of artistic care does not

alone constitute great acting. The inspired warmth of passion in tragedy and the sudden glow of humour in comedy cover the artificial framework with an impenetrable veil: this is the very climax of great art, for which there seems to be no other name but genius. It is then, and then only, that an audience feels that it is in the presence of a reality rather than a fiction. To an audience an ounce of genius has more weight than a ton of talent; for though it respects the latter, it reverences the former. But the creative power, divine as it may be, should in common gratitude pay due regard to the reflective; for Art is the handmaid of Genius, and only asks the modest wages of respectful consideration in payment for her valuable services. A splendid torrent of genius ought never to be checked, but it should be wisely guided into the deep channel of the stream, from whose surface it will then reflect Nature without a ripple. Genius dyes the hues that resemble those of the rainbow; Art fixes the colours that they may stand. In the race for fame purely artificial actors cannot hope to win against those whose genius is guided by their art; and, on the other hand, Intuition must not complain if, unbridled or with too loose a rein, it stumbles on the course, and so allows a well-ridden hack to distance it.

Should an Actor "Feel" His Part

Much has been written upon the question as to whether an actor ought to feel the char-

acter he acts, or be dead to any sensations in this direction. Excellent artists differ in their opinions on this important point. In discussing it I must refer to some words I wrote in one of my early chapters:

"The methods by which actors arrive at great effects vary according to their own natures; this renders the teaching of the art by any strictly defined lines a difficult matter."

There has lately been a discussion on the subject, in which many have taken part, and one quite notable debate between two distinguished actors, one of the English and the other of the French stage [Henry Irving and Mons. Coquelin]. These gentlemen, though they differ entirely in their ideas, are, nevertheless, equally right. The method of one, I have no doubt, is the best he could possibly devise for himself; and the same may be said of the rules of the other as applied to himself. But they must work with their own tools; if they had to adopt each other's they would be as much confused as if compelled to exchange languages. One believes that he must feel the character he plays, even to the shedding of real tears, while the other prefers never to lose himself for an instant, and there is no doubt that they both act with more effect by adhering to their own dogmas.

For myself, I know that I act best when the heart is warm and the head is cool. In observing the works of great painters I find

that they have no conventionalities except their own; hence they are masters, and each is at the head of his own school. They are original, and could not imitate even if they would.

So with acting, no master-hand can prescribe rules for the head of another school. If, then, I appear bold in putting forth my suggestions, I desire it to be clearly understood that I do not present them to original or experienced artists who have formed their school, but to the student who may have a temperament akin to my own, and who could, therefore, blend my methods with his preconceived ideas.

Learning to Act

Many instructors in the dramatic art fall into the error of teaching too much. The pupil should first be allowed to exhibit his quality, and so teach the teacher what to teach. This course would answer the double purpose of first revealing how much the pupil is capable of learning, and, what is still more important, of permitting him to display his powers untrammeled. Whereas, if the master begins by pounding his dogmas into the student, the latter becomes environed by a foreign influence which, if repugnant to his nature, may smother his ability.

It is necessary to be cautious in studying elocution and gesticulation, lest they become our

masters instead of our servants. These necessary but dangerous ingredients must be administered and taken in homeopathic doses, or the patient may die by being overstimulated. But, even at the risk of being artificial, it is better to have studied these arbitrary rules than to enter a profession with no knowledge whatever of its mechanism. Dramatic instinct is so implanted in humanity that it sometimes misleads us, fostering the idea that because we have the natural talent within we are equally endowed with the power of bringing it out. This is the common error, the rock on which the histrionic aspirant is oftenest wrecked. Very few actors succeed who crawl into the service through the "cabin windows"; and if they do it is a lifelong regret with them that they did not exert their courage and sail at first "before the mast."

Many of the shining lights who now occupy the highest positions on the stage, and whom the public voice delights to praise, have often appeared in the dreaded character of omnes, marched in processions, sung out of tune in choruses, and shouted themselves hoarse for Brutus and Mark Antony.

If necessity is the mother of invention, she is the foster-mother of art, for the greatest actors that ever lived have drawn their early nourishment from her breast. We learn our profession by the mortifications we are compelled to go through in order to get a living.

The sons and daughters of wealthy parents who have money at their command, and can settle their weekly expenses without the assistance of the box office, indignantly refuse to lower themselves by assuming some subordinate character for which they are cast, and march home because their fathers and mothers will take care of them. Well, they had better stay there!

But whether you are rich or poor, if you would be an actor begin at the beginning. This is the old conventional advice, and is as good now in its old age as it was in its youth. All actors will agree in this, and as Puff says, in the *Critic*, "When they do agree on the stage the unanimity is wonderful." Enroll yourself as a "super" in some first-class theatre, where there is a stock company and likely to be a periodical change of programme, so that even in your low degree the practice will be varied. After having posed a month as an innocent English rustic, you may, in the next play, have an opportunity of being a noble Roman. Do the little you have to do as well as you can; if you are in earnest the stage-manager will soon notice it and your advancement will begin at once. You have now made the plunge, the ice is broken; there is no more degradation for you; every step you take is forward.

A great American statesman said, "There is always plenty of room at the top." So there is, Mr. Webster, after you get there. But we must climb, and climb slowly too, so that we

can look back without any unpleasant sensations; for if we are cast suddenly upon the giddy height our heads will swim and down we shall go. Look also at the difficulties that will beset you by beginning "at the top." In the first place, no manager in his senses will permit it; and if he did, your failure — which is almost inevitable — not only will mortify you, but your future course for some time to come will be on the downward path. Then, in disgust, sore and disheartened, you will retire from the profession which perhaps your talents might have ornamented if they had been properly developed.

Joseph Jefferson in Montreal

playwrights and actors

In May, 1886, Mr. Jefferson paid a visit to Montreal, and greatly enjoyed a drive through Mount Royal Park and to Sault au Recollet. That week he appeared in "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Cricket on the Hearth." Speaking of Boucicault, who dramatised Rip, he said to the editor of this volume: "Yes, he is a consummate retoucher of other men's work. His experience on the stage tells him just what points to expand and emphasise with most effect. No author seated at his desk all his life, without theatrical training, could ever have rewritten Rip with such success. Among modern plays I consider 'The Scrap of Paper' by Victorien

Sardou to be the most ingenious of all. If Sardou only had heart he would be one of the greatest dramatists that ever lived. Had he written 'The Cricket on the Hearth,' Caleb Plummer instead of being patient, resigned and lovable would have been filled with the vengeful ire of a revolutionist."

With regard to Shakespeare Mr. Jefferson said: "'Macbeth' is his greatest play, the deepest in meaning, the best knit from the first scene to the last. While 'Othello' centres on jealousy, 'Lear' on madness, 'Romeo and Juliet' on love, 'Macbeth' turns on fate, on the supernal influences which compel a man with good in him to a murderous course. The weird witches who surround the bubbling caldron are Fates."

Recalling his early days on the boards he remarked: "Then a young actor had to play a varied round of parts in a single season. To-night it would be farce, to-morrow tragedy, the next night some such melodrama as 'Ten Nights in a Bar-room.' This not only taught an actor his business, it gave him a chance to find out where his strength lay, whether as Dundreary, Hamlet, or Zeke Homespun."

THE JEFFERSON FACE

One of Mr. Jefferson's company that season was his son, Mr. Thomas Jefferson. When I spoke of his remarkable resemblance to the portraits of President Jefferson, I was told: "If physiognomy counts for anything, all the

Jeffersons have sprung from one stock; we look alike wherever you find us. The next time you are in Richmond, Virginia, I wish you to notice the statue of Thomas Jefferson, one of the group surrounding George Washington beside the capitol. That statue might serve as a likeness of my father. When his father was once playing in Washington, President Jefferson, who warmly admired his talents, sent for him and received him most hospitably. When they compared genealogies they could come no nearer than that both families had come from the same county in England."

Montreal has several highly meritorious art collections: these, of course, were open to Mr. Jefferson. He was particularly pleased with the canvases of Corot in the mansion of Sir George Drummond. That afternoon another collector showed him his gallery and pointed to a portrait of his son, for the three years past a student of art in Paris. Mr. Jefferson asked: "How can you bear to be parted from him so long?"

He could be witty as well as kind in his remarks. A kinswoman in his company grumbled that the Montreal *Herald* had called her nose a poem.

"No, my dear," was his comment, "it's not a poem, but a stanza, something shorter."

On Dominion Square I showed him the site occupied by the Ice Palace during the recent Winter Carnival; on the right stood a Methodist Church, on the left the Roman Catholic Cathedral. He remarked simply: "So there 's a coolness between them!"

EDWIN BOOTH

[Mr. William Winter's "Life and Art of Edwin Booth" is indispensable to a student of the American stage. Here are two paragraphs chosen from many as illuminating:

"The salient attributes of Booth's art were imagination, insight, grace, intense emotion, and melancholy refinement. In Hamlet, Richelieu, Othello, Iago, Lear, Bertuccio, and Lucius Brutus they were conspicuously manifest. But the controlling attribute, — that which imparted individual character, colour and fascination to his acting, — was the thoughtful introspective habit of a stately mind, abstracted from passion and suffused with mournful dreaminess of temperament. The moment that charm began to work, his victory was complete. It was that which made him the true image of Shakespeare's thought, in the glittering halls of Elsinore, on its midnight battlements, and in its lonely, wind-beaten place of graves.

"Under the discipline of sorrow, and through years that bring the philosophic mind, Booth drifted further and further away from things dark and terrible, whether in the possibilities of human life or in the world of imagination. That is the direction of true growth. In all characters that evoked his essential spirit — in characters which rested on spiritualised intellect, or on sensibility to fragile loveliness, the joy that is unattainable, the glory that fades, and the beauty that perishes — he was peerless. Hamlet, Richelieu, Faust, Manfred, Jacques, Esmond, Sydney Carton, and Sir Edward Mortimer are all, in different ways, suggestive of the personality that Booth was fitted to illustrate. It is the loftiest type that human nature affords, because it is the embodied supremacy of the soul, and because therein it denotes the only possible escape from the cares and vanities of a transitory world."

The letters which follow are from "Edwin Booth: Recollections by his daughter, Edwina Booth Grossman, and

Letters to Her and to His Friends." Copyright, 1894, Century Company, New York.— Ed.]

To His Daughter

Booth's Theater,
New York, November 15, 1871.

My Own Dear Daughter:

I arrived here last night, and found your pretty gift awaiting me. Your letter pleased me very, very much in every respect, and your little souvenir gave me far more delight than if it were of real gold. When you are older you will understand how precious little things, seemingly of no value in themselves, can be loved and prized above all price when they convey the love and thoughtfulness of a good heart. This little token of your desire to please me, my darling, is therefore very dear to me, and I will cherish it as long as I live. If God grants me so many years, I will show it you when you are a woman, and then you will appreciate my preference for so little a thing, made by you, to anything money might have bought. God bless you, my darling! . . .

God bless you again and again! Your loving father.

To His Daughter

Chicago, March 2, 1873.

My Dear Big Daughter:

Your last letter was very jolly, and made me almost happy. Pip (the dog) is yelping to write

to you, and so is your little brother, St. Valentine, the bird; but I greatly fear they will have to wait another week, for, you know, I have to hold the pen for them, and I have written so many letters, and to-day my hand is tired.

Don't you think it jollier to receive silly letters sometimes than to get a repetition of sermons on good behaviour? It is because I desire to encourage in you a vein of pleasantry, which is most desirable in one's correspondence, as well as in conversation, that I put aside the stern old father, and play papa now and then.

When I was learning to act tragedy, I had frequently to perform comic parts, in order to acquire a certain ease of manner that my serious parts might not appear too stilted; so you must endeavour in your letters, in your conversation, and your general deportment, to be easy and natural, graceful and dignified. But remember that dignity does not consist of overbecoming pride and haughtiness; self-respect, politeness and gentleness in all things and to all persons will give you sufficient dignity. Well, I declare, I've dropped into a sermon, after all, haven't I? I 'm afraid I 'll have to let Pip and the bird have a chance, or else I 'll go on preaching till the end of my letter. You must tell me what you are reading now, and how you progress in your studies, and how good you are trying to be. Of that I have no fear. I doubt if I shall get to Philadelphia in June; so do not expect me until

school breaks up and then — "hey for Cos Cob" and the fish-poles! When I was last there the snow was high above our knees; but still I liked it better than the city . . . .

Love and kisses from your grim old father.

To His Daughter

April 23, 1876.

My Darling Daughter,

. . . When I was at Eton (I don't refer now to the dinner-table) my Greek and Latin were of such a superior quality that had it not been for an unforeseen accident I would have carried off all the honours. The accident lay in this: I never went to school there except in dreams. How often, ah! how often have I imagined the delights of a collegiate education! What a world of never-ending interest lies open to the master of languages!

The best translations cannot convey to us the strength and exquisite delicacy of thought in its native garb, and he to whom such books are shut flounders about in outer darkness. I have suffered so much from the lack of that which my father could easily have given me in youth, and which he himself possessed, that I am all the more anxious you shall escape my punishment in that respect; that you may not, like me, dream of those advantages which others enjoy through any lack of opportunity or neglect of mine. Therefore, learn to love your Latin, your French, and your English grammar; standing firmly and

securely on them, you have a solid foothold in the field of literature. . . .

Think how interesting it will be hereafter to refer to your journal, and see the rapid development, not only of your mind, but of your moral growth; only do not fail to record all your shortcomings; they will not stand as reproaches, but as mere snags in the tortuous river of your life, to be avoided in succeeding trips farther down the stream. They beset us all along the route, from the cradle to the grave, and if we can only see them we can avoid many rough bumps.

God bless my darling! PAPA.

To His Daughter

CHICAGO, October 9, 1886.

. . . I am glad to know that baby has begun to crawl; don't put her on her feet too soon; consider her legs *a la bow*. . . . I closed my first week here with two enormous houses. A hard week's work has greatly tired me. . . . Jefferson called and left with me the manuscript of his reminiscences, which he has been writing. So far as he has written it, it is intensely interesting and amusing, and well written in a free and chatty style; it will be the best autobiography of any actor yet published if he continues it in its present form. I sent you some book notices from Lawrence Hutton's clippings for me. . . . In the article I send to-day you will see that I am gently touched up on the point of the "old

school"; my reference was not to the old style of acting, but the old stock theatre as a school — where a beginner had the advantage of a great variety of experience in farces, as well as tragedies and comedies, and a frequent change of programme. There is no "school" now; there is a more natural style of acting, perhaps, but the novice can learn nothing from long runs of a single play . . .

To His Daughter

New York, January 5, 1888.

. . . As for God's reward for what I have done, I can hardly appreciate it; it is more like punishment for misdeeds (of which I 've done many) than grace for good ones (if I 've done any). Homelessness is the actor's fate; physical incapacity to attain what is most required and desired by such a spirit as I am a slave to. If there be rewards, I am certainly well paid, but hard schooling in life's thankless lessons has made we somewhat of a philosopher, and I 've learned to take the buffets and rewards of fortune with equal thanks, and in suffering all to suffer — I won't say nothing, but comparatively little. Dick Stoddard wrote a poem called "The King's Bell," which fits my case exactly (you may have read it). He dedicated it to Lorimer Graham, who never knew an unhappy day in his brief life, instead of to me, who never knew a really happy one. You mustn 't suppose from this that I'm ill in mind or body: on the

contrary, I am well enough in both; nor am I a pessimist. I merely wanted you to know that the sugar of my life is bitter-sweet; perhaps not more so than every man's whose experience has been above and below the surface. . . . Business has continued large, and increases a little every night; the play will run two weeks longer. Sunday, at four o'clock, I start for Baltimore, arriving there at ten o'clock. . . .

To-morrow, a meeting of actors, managers, and artists at breakfast, to discuss and organise, if possible, a theatrical club* like the Garrick of London. . . .

To His Daughter

Detroit, April 14, 1890.

. . . Yes; it is indeed most gratifying to feel that age has not rendered my work stale and tiresome, as is usually the case with actors (especially tragedians) at my time. Your dear mother's fear was that I would culminate too early, as I seemed then to be advancing so rapidly. Somehow I can't rid myself of the belief that both she and my father helped me. But as for the compensation? Nothing of fame or fortune can compensate for the spiritual suffering that one possessing such qualities has to endure. To pass life in a sort of dream, where "nothing is but what is not" — a loneliness in

*This took form as "The Players"; its home, 16 Gramercy Park, New York, was a gift from Mr. Booth. It had long been his residence, and there he passed away.

the very midst of a constant crowd, as it were — is not a desirable condition of existence, especially when the body also has to share the "penalty of greatness," as it is termed. Bosh! I'd sooner be an obscure farmer, a hayseed from Wayback, or a cabinetmaker, as my father advised, than the most distinguished man on earth. But Nature cast me for the part she found me best fitted for, and I have had to play it, and must play it till the curtain falls. But you must not think me sad about it. No; I am used to it, and am contented.

I continue well, and act with a vigour which sometimes surprises myself, and all the company notice it, and comment upon it. I 'm glad the babes had a jolly birthday. Bless 'em! Love for all. PAPA.

To His Daughter

THE PLAYERS, NEW YORK,
March 22, 1891.

DEAR DAUGHTER:

I 'm in no mood for letter-writing to-day. The shock (of Mr. Lawrence Barrett's death) so sudden and so distressing, and the gloomy, depressing weather, entirely unfit me for the least exertion — even to think. Hosts of friends, all eager to assist poor Mrs. Barrett, seem helpless in confusion, and all the details of the sad business seem to be huddled on her . . .

General Sherman's son, "Father Tom," as he

is affectionately called by all the family and the friends of the dear old General, will attend. He was summoned from Europe recently to his father's deathbed, and he happens to be in time to perform services for his father's friend, poor Lawrence. After the services to-morrow, the remains and a few friends will go direct to Cohasset for the burial — Tuesday — where Barrett had only two weeks ago placed his mother, removed from her New York grave to a family lot which he had recently purchased at Cohasset. He had also enlarged his house there, where he intended to pass his old age in privacy. Doctor Smith was correct in his assertion that the glandular disease was incurable, and the surgical operation would prolong life only a year or so; the severe cold produced pneumonia; which Barrett's physicians say might have been overcome but for the glandular disease still in the blood. Mrs. Barrett knew from the first operation that he had at most a year or so to live, and yet by the doctor's advice kept it secret, and did everything to cheer and humour him. She 's a remarkable woman. She has been expecting to be suddenly called to him for more than a year past, yet the blow came with terrible force. Milly, Mr. Barrett's youngest daughter, and her husband, came last night. . . . When I saw Lawrence on Thursday he was in a burning fever and asked me to keep away for fear his breath might affect me, and it pained him to talk. He pulled through three

acts of "De Mauprat" the night before, and sent for his wife that night. His death was very peaceful, with no sign of pain. A couple of weeks ago he and I were to meet General Sherman at dinner: death came instead. To-night Barrett had invited about twenty distinguished men to meet me at Delmonico's, and again the grim guest attends. . . .

My room is like an office of some state official; letters, telegrams, and callers come every moment, some on business, many in sympathy. Three hours have elapsed since I finished the last sentence, and I expect a call from Bromley before I retire. A world of business matters have been disturbed by this sudden break of contracts with actors and managers, and everything pertaining to next season, as well as much concerning the balance of the present one, must be rearranged or cancelled. I, of course, am free; but for the sake of the company I shall fulfil my time, to pay their salaries, this week here; and next week in Brooklyn, as they were engaged by Barrett for my engagement. After which they will be out of employment for the balance of the season. . .

PAPA.

TO MISS EMMA F. CARY

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY, 1864.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

A little lull in the whirl of excitement in which my brain has nearly lost its balance affords me an opportunity to write to you. It would be

difficult to explain the many little annoyances I have been subjected to in the production of "Richelieu," but when I tell you that it far surpasses "Hamlet," and exceeds all my expectations, you may suppose that I have not been very idle all this while. I wish you could see it.

Professor Peirce* has been here, and he will tell you of it. It really seems that the dreams of my past life — so far as my profession is concerned — are being realised. What Mary and I used to plan for my future, what Richard and I used laughingly to promise ourselves in "our model theatre," seems to be realised — in these two plays, at least. As history says of the great cardinal, I am "too fortunate a man not to be superstitious," and as I find my hopes being fulfilled, I cannot help but believe that there is a sufficient importance in my art to interest them still; that to a higher influence than the world believes I am moved by I owe the success I have achieved. Assured that all I do in this advance carries, even beyond the range of my little world (the theatre), an elevating and refining influence, while in it the effect is good, I begin to feel really happy in my once uneasy sphere of action. I dare say I shall soon be contented with my lot. I will tell you this much: I have been offered the means to a speedy and an ample fortune, from all parts of the country, but prefer the limit I have set,

*The late Professor Peirce, professor of mathematics in Harvard University, father of Professor James Mills Peirce.

wherein I have the power to carry out my wishes, though "on half pay," as it were. . . .

Ever your friend,

EDWIN BOOTH.

To Miss Emma F. Cary

[Three weeks after the assassination by his brother, John Wilkes Booth, of President Lincoln.]

Saturday, May 6, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I 've just received your letter. I have been in one sense unable to write, but you know, of course, what my condition is, and need no excuses.

I have been, by the advice of my friends, "cooped up" since I arrived here, going out only occasionally in the evening. My health is good, but I suffer from the want of fresh air and exercise.

Poor mother is in Philadelphia, about crushed by her sorrows, and my sister, Mrs. Clarke, is ill, and without the least knowledge of her husband, who was taken from her several days ago, with Junius.

My position is such a delicate one that I am obliged to use the utmost caution. Hosts of friends are staunch and true to me. Here and in Boston I feel safe. What I am in Philadelphia and elsewhere I know not. All I do [know] of the above named city is that there is one great heart firm and faster bound to me than ever.

Sent in answer to dear Mary's [his wife's] prayers — I faithfully believe it. She will do what Mary struggled, suffered, and died in doing. My baby, too, is there. Now that the greatest excitement is over, and a lull is in the storm, I feel the need of that dear angel; but during the heat of it I was glad she was not here.

When Junius and Mr. Clarke are at liberty, mother will come here and bring Edwina [his daughter] to me. I wish I could see with others' eyes; all my friends assure me that my name shall be free, and that in a little while I may be where I was and what I was; but, alas! it looks dark to me.

God bless you all for your great assistance in my behalf; even dear Dick aided me in my extremity, did he not?

Give my love to all and kisses to George.

. . . I do not think the feeling is so strong in my favour in Philadelphia as it is here and in Boston. I am not known there. Ever yours

To Mr. Nahum Capen

[In response to an inquiry regarding his brother, John Wilkes Booth.]

Windsor Hotel, New York,
July 28, 1881.

Dear Sir:

I can give you very little information regarding my brother John. I seldom saw him since his early boyhood in Baltimore. He was a rattle-pated fellow, filled with quixotic notions.

While at the farm in Maryland he would charge on horseback through the woods, "spouting" heroic speeches with a lance in his hand — a relic of the Mexican war — given to father by some soldier who had served under Taylor. We regarded him as a good-hearted, harmless, though wild-brained, boy, and used to laugh at his patriotic froth whenever secession was discussed. That he was insane on that one point no one who knew him well can doubt. When I told him that I had voted for Lincoln's reëlection he expressed deep regret, and declared his belief that Lincoln would be made king of America; and this I believe, drove him beyond the limits of reason. I asked him once why he did not join the Confederate army. To which he replied, "I promised mother I would keep out of the quarrel, if possible, and I am sorry that I said so." Knowing my sentiments, he avoided me, rarely visiting my house, except to see his mother, when political topics were not touched upon — at least in my presence. He was of a gentle, loving disposition, very boyish and full of fun — his mother's darling — and his deed and death crushed her spirit. He possessed rare dramatic talent, and would have made a brilliant mark in the theatrical world. This is positively all that I know about him, having left him a mere school-boy, when I went with my father to California in 1852. On my return in 1856 we were separated by professional engagements, which kept him mostly in the South

while I was employed in the Eastern and Northern states.

I do not believe any of the wild, romantic stories published in the papers concerning him; but of course he may have been engaged in political matters of which I know nothing. All his theatrical friends speak of him as a poor crazy boy, and such his family think of him. I am sorry I can afford you no further light on the subject. Very truly yours,

Advice to a Young Actor

[to walter thomas]

New York, August 28, 1889.

My Dear Mr. Thomas:

I was surprised to learn that your engagement with Mr. Barrett is terminated, and am sorry for the cause, although I believe the result will be to your advantage. Your chances for promotion will be better in a company that is not confined to so limited a repertoire as mine, in which so few opportunities occur for the proper exercise of youthful talent. A frequent change of rôle, and of the lighter sort — especially such as one does not like forcing one's self to use the very utmost of his ability in the performance of — is the training requisite for a mastery of the actor's art.

I had seven years' apprenticeship at it, during which most of my labour was in the field of comedy — "walking gentleman," burlesque, and

low comedy parts — the while my soul was yearning for high tragedy. I did my best with all that I was cast for, however, and the unpleasant experience did me a world of good. Had I followed my own bent, I would have been, long ago, a "crushed tragedian."

I will, as you request, give you a line to Mr. Palmer, and I hope you may obtain a position that will afford you the necessary practice. With best wishes. Truly yours,

EDWIN BOOTH.

SIR HENRY IRVING

[On November 24, 1883, Henry Irving closed his first engagement in New York. William Winter's review appeared next morning in the *Tribune*. It is reprinted in his book, "Henry Irving," published by G. J. Coombes, New York, 1885. Mr. Winter said: "Mr. Irving has impersonated here nine different men, each one distinct from all the others. Yet in so doing he has never ceased to exert one and the same personal charm, the charm of genialised intellect. The soul that is within the man has suffused his art and made it victorious. The same forms of expression, lacking this spirit, would have lacked the triumph. All of them, indeed, are not equally fine. Mr. Irving's 'Mathias' and 'Louis XI.' are higher performances than his 'Shylock' and 'Dorincourt,' higher in imaginative tone and in adequacy of feeling and treatment. But, throughout all these forms, the drift of his spirit, setting boldly away from conventions and formalities, has been manifested with delightful results. He has always seemed to be alive with the specific vitality of the person represented. He has never seemed a wooden puppet of the stage, bound in by formality and straining after a vague scholastic ideal of technical correctness."

Mr. Irving's addresses, "The Drama," copyright by the United States Book Company, New York, were published in 1892. They furnish the pages now presented — abounding in self-revelation.— Ed.]

The Stage as an Instructor

To boast of being able to appreciate Shakespeare more in reading him than in seeing him acted used to be a common method of affecting special intellectuality. I hope this delusion — a gross and pitiful one to most of us — has almost absolutely died out. It certainly conferred a very cheap badge of superiority on those who

entertained it. It seemed to each of them an inexpensiye opportunity of worshipping himself on a pedestal. But what did it amount to? It was little more than a conceited and feather-headed assumption that an unprepared reader, whose mind is usually full of far other things, will see on the instant all that has been developed in hundreds of years by the members of a studious and enthusiastic profession. My own conviction is that there are few characters or passages of our great dramatists which will not repay original study. But at least we must recognise the vast advantages with which a practised actor, impregnated by the associations of his life, and by study — with all the practical and critical skill of his profession up to the date at which he appears, whether he adopts or rejects tradition — addresses himself to the interpretation of any great character, even if he have no originality whatever. There is something still more than this, however, in acting. Every one who has the smallest histrionic gift has a natural dramatic fertility; so that as soon as he knows the author's text, and obtains self-possession, and feels at home in a part without being too familiar with it, the mere automatic action of rehearsing and playing it at once begins to place the author in new lights, and to give the personage being played an individuality partly independent of, and yet consistent with, and rendering more powerfully visible, the dramatist's conception. It is the

vast power a good actor has in this way which has led the French to speak of creating a part when they mean its first being played, and French authors are as conscious of the extent and value of this coöperation of actors with them, that they have never objected to the phrase, but, on the contrary, are uniformly lavish in their homage to the artists who have created on the boards the parts which they themselves have created on paper.

Inspiration in Acting

It is often supposed that great actors trust to the inspiration of the moment. Nothing can be more erroneous. There will, of course, be such moments, when an actor at a white heat illumines some passage with a flash of imagination (and this mental condition, by the way, is impossible to the student sitting in his arm-chair); but the great actor's surprises are generally well weighed, studied, and balanced. We know that Edmund Kean constantly practised before a mirror effects which startled his audience by their apparent spontaneity. It is the accumulation of such effects which enables an actor, after many years, to present many great characters with remarkable completeness.

I do not want to overstate the case, or to appeal to anything that is not within common experience, so I can confidently ask you whether a scene in a great play has not been at some time vividly impressed on your minds by the delivery

of a single line, or even of one forcible word. Has not this made the passage far more real and human to you than all the thought you have devoted to it? An accomplished critic has said that Shakespeare himself might have been surprised had he heard the "Fool, fool, fool!" of Edmund Kean. And though all actors are not Keans, they have in varying degree this power of making a dramatic character step out of the page, and come nearer to our hearts and our understandings.

After all, the best and most convincing exposition of the whole art of acting is given by Shakespeare himself: "To hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Thus the poet recognised the actor's art as a most potent ally in the representations of human life. He believed that to hold the mirror up to nature was one of the worthiest functions in the sphere of labour, and actors are content to point to his definition of their work as the charter of their privileges.

Acting as an Art. How Irving Began

The practice of the art of acting is a subject difficult to treat with the necessary brevity. Beginners are naturally anxious to know what course they should pursue. In common with other actors, I receive letters from young people many of whom are very earnest in their ambition

to adopt the dramatic calling, but not sufficiently alive to the fact that success does not depend on a few lessons in declamation. When I was a boy I had a habit which I think would be useful to all young students. Before going to see a play of Shakespeare's I used to form — in a very juvenile way — a theory as to the working out of the whole drama, so as to correct my conceptions by those of the actors; and though I was, as a rule, absurdly wrong, there can be no doubt that any method of independent study is of enormous importance, not only to youngsters, but also to students of a larger growth. Without it the mind is apt to take its stamp from the first forcible impression it receives, and to fall into a servile dependence upon traditions, which, robbed of the spirit that created them, are apt to be purely mischievous. What was natural to the creator is often unnatural and lifeless in the imitator. No two people form the same conceptions of character, and therefore it is always advantageous to see an independent and courageous exposition of an original ideal. There can be no objection to the kind of training that imparts a knowledge of manners and customs, and the teaching which pertains to simple deportment on the stage is necessary and most useful; but you cannot possibly be taught any tradition of character, for that has no permanence. Nothing is more fleeting than any traditional method or impersonation. You may learn where a par-

ticular personage used to stand on the stage, or down which trap the ghost of Hamlet's father vanished; but the soul of interpretation is lost, and it is this soul which the actor has to re-create for himself. It is not mere attitude or tone that has to be studied; you must be moved by the impulse of being; you must impersonate and not recite.

Feeling as a Reality or a Semblance

It is necessary to warn you against the theory expounded with brilliant ingenuity by Diderot that the actor never feels. When Macready played Virginius, after burying his beloved daughter, he confessed that his real experience gave a new force to his acting in the most pathetic situations of the play. Are we to suppose that this was a delusion, or that the sensibility of the man was a genuine aid to the actor? Bannister said of John Kemble that he was never pathetic because he had no children. Talma says that when deeply moved he found himself making a rapid and fugitive observation on the alternation of his voice, and on a certain spasmodic vibration which it contracted in tears. Has not the actor who can thus make his feelings a part of his art an advantage over the actor who never feels, but who makes his observations solely from the feelings of others? It is necessary to this art that the mind should have, as it were, a double consciousness, in which all the emotions proper to the occasion may have

full swing, while the actor is all the time on the alert for every detail of his method. It may be that his playing will be more spirited one night than another. But the actor who combines the electric force of a strong personality with a mastery of the resources of his art must have a greater power over his audiences than the passionless actor who gives a most artistic simulation of the emotions he never experiences.

Gesture. Listening as an Art. Team-Play on the Stage

With regard to gesture, Shakespeare's advice is all-embracing. "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance that you overstep not the modesty of nature." And here comes the consideration of a very material part of the actor's business — by-play. This is of the very essence of true art. It is more than anything else significant of the extent to which the actor has identified himself with the character he represents. Recall the scenes between Iago and Othello, and consider how the whole interest of the situation depends on the skill with which the gradual effect of the poisonous suspicion instilled into the Moor's mind is depicted in look and tone, slight of themselves, but all contributing to the intensity of the situation. One of the greatest tests of an actor is his capacity for listening. By-play must be unobtrusive; the student should remember that the most minute expression attracts

attention, that nothing is lost, that by-play is as mischievous when it is injudicious as it is effective when rightly conceived, and that while trifles make perfection, perfection is no trifle. This lesson was enjoined on me when I was a very young man by that remarkable actress, Charlotte Cushman. I remember that when she played Meg Merrilies I was cast for Henry Bertram, on the principle, seemingly, that an actor with no singing voice is admirably fitted for a singing part. It was my duty to give Meg Merrilies a piece of money, and I did it after the traditional fashion by handing her a large purse full of the coin of the realm, in the shape of broken crockery, which was generally used in financial transactions on the stage, because when the virtuous maid rejected with scorn the advances of the lordly libertine, and threw his pernicious bribe upon the ground, the clatter of the broken crockery suggested fabulous wealth. But after the play Miss Cushman, in the course of some kindly advice, said to me: "Instead of giving me that purse, don't you think it would have been much more natural if you had taken a number of coins from your pocket, and given me the smallest? That is the way one gives alms to a beggar, and it would have added to the realism of the scene." I have never forgotten that lesson, for simple as it was, it contained many elements of dramatic truth. It is most important that an actor should learn that he is a figure in a picture, and that the least

exaggeration destroys the harmony of the composition. All the members of the company should work toward a common end, with the nicest subordination of their individuality to the general purpose. Without this method a play when acted is at best a disjoined and incoherent piece of work, instead of being a harmonious whole like the fine performance of an orchestral symphony.

ELLEN TERRY

[In the autumn of 1883, during Henry Irving's first engagement in New York, Ellen Terry played a round of characters as his leading lady. In the *Tribune*, Mr. William Winter said: "Miss Ellen Terry's Portia is delicious. Her voice is perfect music. Her clear, bell-like elocution is more than a refreshment, it is a luxury. Her simple manner, always large and adequate, is a great beauty of the art which it so deftly conceals. Her embodiment of a woman's loveliness, such as, in Portia, should be at once stately and fascinating and inspire at once respect and passion, was felicitous beyond the reach of descriptive phrases." Then, on her appearance in "Much Ado About Nothing:" "She permeates the raillery of Beatrice with an indescribable charm of mischievous sweetness. The silver arrows of her pungent wit have no barb, for evidently she does not mean that they shall really wound. Her appearance and carriage are beautiful, and her tones melt into music. There is no hint of the virago here, and even the tone of sarcasm is superficial. It is archness playing over kindness that is presented here." On her Ophelia, Mr. Winter remarks: "Ophelia is an image, or personification of innocent, delirious, feminine youth and beauty, and she passes before us in the two stages of sanity and delirium. The embodiment is fully within Miss Terry's reach, and is one of the few unmistakably perfect creations with which dramatic art has illumined literature and adorned the stage."

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Hamlet — Irving's Greatest Part

When I went with Coghlan to see Henry Irving's Philip I was no stranger to his acting.

I had been present with Tom Taylor, then dramatic critic of the *Times*, at the famous first night at the Lyceum, in 1874, when Henry put his fortune — counted, not in gold, but in years of scorned delights and laborious days, years of constant study and reflection, of Spartan self-denial and deep melancholy — when he put it all to the touch "to win or lose it all." This is no exaggeration. Hamlet was by far the greatest part that he had ever played or ever was to play. If he had failed — but why pursue it? He could not fail.

Yet, the success on the first night at the Lyceum, in 1874, was not of that electrical, almost hysterical splendour which has greeted the momentous achievements of some actors. The first two acts were received with indifference. The people could not see how packed they were with superb acting — perhaps because the new Hamlet was so simple, so quiet, so free from the exhibition of actors' artifices which used to bring down the house in "Louis XI." and in "Richelieu," but which were really the easy things in acting, and in "Richelieu" (in my opinion) not especially well done. In "Hamlet" Henry Irving did not go to the audience; he made them come to him. Slowly, but surely, attention gave place to admiration, admiration to enthusiasm, enthusiasm to triumphant acclaim.

I have seen many Hamlets, — Fechter, Charles Kean, Rossi, Friedrich Haase, Forbes-Robertson, and my own son, Gordon Craig,

among them, — but they were not in the same hemisphere! I refuse to go and see Hamlets now. I want to keep Henry Irving's fresh and clear in my memory until I die.

The Birmingham Night

When he engaged me to play Ophelia in 1878, he asked me to go down to Birmingham to see the play, and that night I saw what I shall always consider the perfection of acting. It had been wonderful in 1874; in 1878 it was far more wonderful. It has been said that when he had the "advantage" of my Ophelia his Hamlet "improved." I don't think so; he was always quite independent of the people with whom he acted.

The Birmingham night he knew I was there. He played — I say it without vanity — for me We players are not above that weakness, if it be a weakness. If ever anything inspires us to do our best, it is the presence in the audience of some fellow-artist who must, in the nature of things, know more completely than any one what we intend, what we do, what we feel. The response from such a member of the audience flies across the footlights to us like a flame. I felt it once when I played Olivia before Eleonora Duse. I felt that she felt it once when she played Marguerite Gautier for me.

When I read "Hamlet" now, everything that Henry did in it seems to me more absolutely right even than I thought at the time. I would

give much to be able to record it all in detail, but — it may be my fault — writing is not the medium in which this can be done. Sometimes I have thought of giving readings of "Hamlet," for I can remember every tone of Henry's voice, every emphasis, every shade of meaning that he saw in the lines and made manifest to the discerning. Yes, I think I could give some pale idea of what his Hamlet was if I read the play!

"Words, words, words!" What is it to say, for instance, that the cardinal qualities of his Prince of Denmark were strength, delicacy, distinction? There was never a touch of commonness. Whatever he did or said, blood and breeding pervaded it.

The Entrance Scene in "Hamlet"

His "make-up" was very pale, and this made his face beautiful when one was close to him, but at a distance it gave him a haggard look. Some said he looked twice his age.

He kept three things going at the same time — the antic madness, the sanity, the sense of the theatre. The last was to all that he imagined and thought what, in the New Testament, charity is said to be to all other virtues.

He was never cross or moody — only melancholy. His melancholy was as simple as it was profound. It was touching, too, rather than defiant. You never thought that he was wantonly sad and enjoying his own misery.

He neglected no *coup de théâtre* [theatrical

artifice] to assist him, but who notices the servants when the host is present?

For instance, his first entrance as Hamlet was what we call, in theatrical parlance, very much "worked up." He was always a tremendous believer in processions, and rightly. It is through such means that royalty keeps its hold on the feeling of the public and makes its mark as a figure and a symbol. Henry Irving understood this. Therefore, to music so apt that it was not remarkable in itself, but a contribution to the general excited anticipation, the court of Denmark came on to the stage. I understood later on, at the Lyceum, what days of patient work had gone to the making of that procession.

At its tail, when the excitement was at fever-heat, came the solitary figure of Hamlet, looking extraordinarily tall and thin. The lights were turned down — another stage trick — to help the effect that the figure was spirit rather than man.

He was weary; his cloak trailed on the ground. He did not wear the miniature of his father obtrusively round his neck! His attitude was one which I have seen in a common little illustration to the "Reciter," compiled by Dr. Pinch, Henry Irving's old schoolmaster. Yet, how right to have taken it, to have been indifferent to its humble origin! Nothing could have been better when translated into life by Irving's genius.

The hair looked blue-black, like the plumage

of a crow; the eyes burning — two fires veiled, as yet, by melancholy. But the appearance of the man was not single, straight, or obvious, as it is when I describe it, any more than his passions throughout the play were. I only remember one moment when his intensity concentrated itself in a straightforward unmistakable emotion, without side-current or backwater. It was when he said:

> The play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King

and, as the curtain came down, was seen to be writing madly on his tablets against one of the pillars.

"O God, that I were a writer!" I paraphrase Beatrice with all my heart. Surely a writer could not string words together about Henry Irving's Hamlet and say nothing, nothing.

"We must start this play a living thing," he used to say at rehearsals, and he worked until the skin grew tight over his face, until he became livid with fatigue, yet still beautiful, to get the opening lines said with individuality, suggestiveness, speed, and power:

Bernardo: Who's there?

Francisco: Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

Bernardo: Long live the king!

Francisco: Bernardo?

Bernardo: He.

Francisco: You come most carefully upon your hour.

Bernardo: 'Tis now struck twelve: get thee to bed, Francisco.

Francisco: For this relief much thanks: 't is bitter cold.

And all that he tried to make others do with these lines he himself did with every line of his own part. Every word lived.

Some said: "Oh, Irving only makes 'Hamlet' a love poem!" They said that, I suppose, because in the nunnery scene with Ophelia he was the lover above the prince and the poet. With what passionate longing his hands hovered over Ophelia at her words, "Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind!"

The Scene with the Players

His advice to the players was not advice. He did not speak it as an actor. Nearly all Hamlets in that scene give away the fact that they are actors and not dilettanti of royal blood. Henry defined the way he would have the players speak as an order, an instruction of the merit of which he was regally sure. There was no patronising flavour in his acting here, not a touch of "I 'll teach you how to do it." He was swift, swift and simple — pausing for the right word now and again, as in the phrase "to hold as 't were the mirror up to nature." His slight pause and eloquent gesture, as the all-

embracing word "nature" came in answer to his call, were exactly repeated unconsciously, years later, by the Queen of Roumania (Carmen Sylva). She was telling us the story of a play that she had written. The words rushed out swiftly, but occasionally she would wait for the one that expressed her meaning most comprehensively and exactly, and, as she got it, up went her hand in triumph over her head — "Like yours in Hamlet," I told Henry at the time.

Irving Engages Me on Trust

The first letter that I ever received from Henry Irving was written on the 20th of July, 1878, from 15A Grafton Street, the house in which he lived during the entire period of his Lyceum management.

Dear Miss Terry: I look forward to the pleasure of calling upon you on Tuesday next at two o'clock.

With every good wish, believe me, Yours sincerely,

Henry Irving.

The call was in reference to my engagement as Ophelia. Strangely characteristic I see it now to have been of Henry that he was content to take my powers as an actress more or less on trust. A mutual friend, Lady Pollock, had told him that I was the very person for him; that

"All London" (a vile but convenient phrase) was talking of my Olivia; that I had acted well in Shakespeare with the Bancrofts; that I should bring to the Lyceum Theatre what players call "a personal following." Henry chose his friends as carefully as he chose his company and his staff. He believed in Lady Pollock implicitly, and he did not — it is possible that he could not — come and see my Olivia for himself.

I was living in Longridge Road when Henry Irving came to see me. Not a word of our conversation about the engagement can I remember. I did notice, however, the great change that had taken place in the man since I had last met him in 1867. Then he was really very ordinary-looking — with a moustache, an unwrinkled face, and a sloping forehead. The only wonderful thing about him was his melancholy. When I was playing the piano, once, in the green room at the Queen's Theatre, he came in and listened. I remember being made aware of his presence by his sigh — the deepest, profoundest, sincerest sigh I ever heard from any human being. He asked me if I would not play the piece again. The incident impressed itself on my mind, inseparably associated with a picture of him as he looked at thirty — a picture by no means pleasing. He looked conceited, and almost savagely proud of the isolation in which he lived. There was a touch of exaggeration in his appearance, a dash of Werther, with a few flourishes of Jingle! Ner-

vously sensitive to ridicule, self-conscious, suffering deeply from his inability to express himself through his art, Henry Irving in 1867 was a very different person from the Henry Irving who called on me at Longridge Road in 1878. In ten years he had found himself, and so lost himself — lost, I mean, much of that stiff, ugly self-consciousness which had encased him as the shell encases the lobster. His forehead had become more massive, and the very outline of his features had altered. He was a man of the world, whose strenuous fighting now was to be done as a general — not, as hitherto, in the ranks. His manner was very quiet and gentle. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength," says the psalmist. That was always like Henry Irving.

And here, perhaps, is the place to say that I, of all people, can perhaps appreciate Henry Irving least justly, although I was his associate on the stage for a quarter of a century, and was on terms of the closest friendship with him for almost as long a time. He had precisely the qualities that I never find likable.

Irving's Egotism

He was an egotist, an egotist of the great type, never "a mean egotist," as he was once slanderously described; and all his faults sprang from egotism, which is, after all, only another name for greatness. So much absorbed was he in his own achievement that he was unable or unwill-

ing to appreciate the achievements of others. I never heard him speak in high terms of the great foreign actors and actresses who from time to time visited England. It would be easy to attribute this to jealousy, but the easy explanation is not the true one. He simply would not give himself up to appreciation. Perhaps appreciation is a wasting though a generous quality of the mind and heart, and best left to lookers-on who have plenty of time to develop it.

I was with him when he saw Sarah Bernhardt act for the first time. The play was "Ruy Blas," and it was one of Sarah's bad days. She was walking through the part listlessly, and I was angry that there should be any ground for Henry's indifference. The same thing happened years later when I took him to see Eleonora Duse. The play was "Locandiera," to which she was eminently unsuited, I think. He was surprised at my enthusiasm. There was an element of justice in his attitude toward the performance which infuriated me, but I doubt if he would have shown more enthusiasm if he had seen her at her best.

As the years went on he grew very much attached to Sarah Bernhardt, and admired her as a colleague whose managerial work in the theatre was as dignified as his own; but of her superb powers as an actress I don't believe he ever had a glimmering notion!

Perhaps it is not true, but, as I believe it to be

true, I may as well state it: It was never any pleasure to him to see the acting of other actors and actresses. Salvini's Othello I know he thought magnificent, but he would not speak of it.

Irving's Simplicity of Character

How dangerous it is to write things that may not be understood! What I have written I have written merely to indicate the qualities in Henry Irving's nature which were unintelligible to me, perhaps because I have always been more woman than artist. He always put the theatre first. He lived in it, he died in it. He had none of my bourgeois qualities — the love of being in love, the love of a home, the dislike of solitude. I have always thought it hard to find my inferiors. He was sure of his high place. In some ways he was far simpler than I. He would talk, for instance, in such an ignorant way to painters and musicians that I blushed for him. But was not my blush far more unworthy than his freedom from all pretentiousness in matters of art?

He never pretended. One of his biographers had said that he posed as being a French scholar. Such a thing, and all things like it, were impossible to his nature. If it were necessary, in one of his plays, to say a few French words, he took infinite pains to learn them, and said them beautifully.

Henry once told me that in the early part of his career, before I knew him, he had been

hooted because of his thin legs. The first service I did him was to tell him that they were beautiful, and to make him give up padding them.

"What do you want with fat, podgy, prize-fighter legs!" I expostulated.

I brought help, too, in pictorial matters. Henry Irving had had little training in such matters; I had had a great deal Judgment about colours, clothes, and lighting must be trained. I had learned from Mr. Watts, from Mr. Goodwin, and from other artists, until a sense of decorative effect had become second nature to me.

Praise to some people at certain stages of their career is more developing than blame. I admired the very things in Henry for which other people criticised him. I hope this helped him a little.

RICHARD MANSFIELD

[Richard Mansfield, one of the great actors of his time, was born in Heligoland, then a British Possession, in 1857. He prepared himself for the East Indian civil service, then studied art, and opened a studio in Boston. He was soon attracted to the stage, and began playing minor parts in comic opera, displaying marked ability from the first. His versatility took him all the way from the role of Koko in the "Mikado," to Beau Brummel and Richard III. His success soon enabled him to assemble a company of his own; as its manager he produced with memorable effect "Cyrano de Bergerac," "Henry V.," and "Julius Cæsar." He died in 1907, a few weeks after a striking creation of "Peer Gynt." A biography of Mr. Mansfield by Mr. Paul Wilstach is published by C. Scribner's Sons, New York.

Mr. Mansfield's article on "Man and the Actor," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1906, copyright by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, is here given almost in full by the kind permission of the publishers and of Mrs. Richard Mansfield. It is in effect an autobiographical revelation of the artist and the man. — ED.]

MAN AND THE ACTOR

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part.

SHAKESPEARE does not say "may" play a part, or "can" play a part, but he says *must* play a part; and he has expressed the conviction of every intelligent student of humanity then and thereafter, now and hereafter. The stage cannot be held in contempt by mankind; because all mankind is acting, and every human being is playing a part. The

better a man plays his part, the better he succeeds. The more a man knows of the art of acting, the greater the man; for, from the king on his throne to the beggar in the street, every man is acting. There is no greater comedian or tragedian in the world than a great king. The knowledge of the art of acting is indispensable to a knowledge of mankind, and when you are able to pierce the disguise in which every man arrays himself, or to read the character which every man assumes, you achieve an intimate knowledge of your fellow men, and you are able to cope with the man, either as he is, or as he pretends to be. It was necessary for Shakespeare to be an actor in order to know men. Without his knowledge of the stage, Shakespeare could never have been the reader of men that he was. And yet we are asked, "Is the stage worth while?"

Napoleon as Actor

Napoleon and Alexander were both great actors — Napoleon perhaps the greatest actor the world has ever seen. Whether on the bridge of Lodi, or in his camp at Tilsit; whether addressing his soldiers in the plains of Egypt; whether throwing open his old gray coat and saying, "Children, will you fire on your general?" whether bidding farewell to them at Fontainebleau; whether standing on the deck of the *Bellerophon*, or on the rocks of St. Helena — he was always an actor. Napoleon had studied the

art of acting, and he knew its value. If the power of the eye, the power of the voice, the power of that all-commanding gesture of the hand, failed him when he faced the regiment of veterans on his return from Elba, he was lost. But he had proved and compelled his audience too often for his art to fail him then. The leveled guns fell. The audience was his. Another crown had fallen! By what? A trick of the stage! Was he willing to die then? to be shot by his old guard? Not he! Did he doubt for one moment his ability as an actor. Not he! If he had, he would have been lost. And that power to control, that power to command, once it is possessed by a man, means that that man can play his part anywhere, and under all circumstances and conditions. Unconsciously or consciously, every great man, every man who has played a great part, has been an actor. Each man, every man, who has made his mark has chosen his character, the character best adapted to himself, and has played it, and clung to it, and made his impress with it. I have but to conjure up the figure of Daniel Webster, who never lost an opportunity to act; or General Grant, who chose for his model William of Orange, surnamed the Silent. You will find every one of your most admired heroes choosing early in life some admired hero of his own to copy. Who can doubt that Napoleon had selected Julius Cæsar? For, once he had founded an empire, everything about him

was modelled after the Cæsarean régime. Look at his coronation robes, the women's gowns — the very furniture! Actors, painters, musicians, politicians, society men and women, and kings and queens, all play their parts, and all build themselves after some favourite model. In this woman of society you trace the influence of the Princess Metternich. In another we see her admiration (and a very proper one) for Her Britannic Majesty. In another we behold George Eliot, or Queen Louise of Prussia, or the influence of some modern society leader. But no matter who it is, from the lowest to the highest, the actor is dominant in the human being, and this trait exhibits itself early in the youngest child. Everywhere you see stage-craft in one form or another. If men loved not costumes and scenery, would the king be escorted by the lifeguards, arrayed in shining helmets and breastplates, which we know are perfectly useless in these days when a bullet will go through fifty of them with ease? The first thing a man thinks of when he has to face any ordeal, be it a coronation or an execution, is, how am I going to look? how am I to behave? what manner shall I assume? shall I appear calm and dignified, or happy and pleased? shall I wear a portentous frown or a beaming smile? how shall I walk? shall I take short steps or long ones? shall I stoop as if bowed with care, or walk erect with courage and pride? shall I gaze fearlessly on all about me, or shall I drop

my eyes modestly to the ground? If man were not always acting, he would not think of these things at all, he would not bother his head about them, but would walk to his coronation or his execution according to his nature. In the last event this would have to be, in some cases, on all fours. . . .

I stretch my eyes over the wide world, and the people in it, and I can see no one who is not playing a part; therefore respect the art of which you are all devotees, and, if you must act, learn to play your parts well. Study the acting of others, so that you may discover what part is being played by others.

The Gift for Acting is Rare

It is, therefore, not amazing that everybody is interested in the art of acting, and it is not amazing that every one thinks he can act. You have only to suggest private theatricals, when a house party is assembled at some country house, to verify the truth of the statement. Immediately commences a lively rivalry as to who shall play this part or that. Each one considers herself or himself best suited, and I have known private theatricals to lead to lifelong enmities.

It is surprising to discover how very differently people who have played parts all their lives deport themselves before the footlights. I was acquainted with a lady in London who had been the wife of a peer of the realm, who had been

ambassadress at foreign courts, who at one time had been a reigning beauty, and who came to me, longing for a new experience, and implored me to give her an opportunity to appear upon the stage. In a weak moment I consented, and as I was producing a play, I cast her for a part which I thought she would admirably suit — that of a society woman. What that woman did and did not do on the stage passes all belief. She became entangled in her train, she could neither sit down nor stand up, she shouted, she could not be persuaded to remain at a respectful distance, but insisted upon shrieking into the actor's ears, and she committed all the gaucheries you would expect from an untrained country wench. But because everybody is acting in private life, every one thinks he can act upon the stage, and there is no profession that has so many critics. Every individual in the audience is a critic, and knows all about the art of acting. But acting is a gift. It cannot be taught. You can teach people how to act acting — but you can't teach them to act. Acting is as much an inspiration as the making of great poetry and great pictures. What is commonly called acting is acting acting. This is what is generally accepted as acting. A man speaks lines, moves his arms, wags his head, and does various other things; he may even shout and rant; some pull down their cuffs and inspect their finger nails; they work hard and perspire, and their skin acts. This is all easily comprehended by the masses,

and passes for acting, and is applauded, but the man who is actually the embodiment of the character he is creating will often be misunderstood, be disliked, and fail to attract. Mediocrity rouses no opposition, but strong individualities and forcible opinions make enemies. It is here that danger lies. Many an actor has set out with an ideal, but, failing to gain general favour, has abandoned it for the easier method of winning popular acclaim. Inspiration only comes to those who permit themselves to be inspired. It is a form of hypnotism. Allow yourself to be convinced by the character you are portraying that you are the character. If you are to play Napoleon, and you are sincere and determined to be Napoleon, Napoleon will not permit you to be any one but Napoleon, or Richard III. Richard III., or Nero Nero, and so on. He would be a poor, miserable pretence of an actor who in the representation of any historical personage were otherwise than firmly convinced, after getting into the man's skin (which means the exhaustive study of all that was ever known about him), that he is living that very man for a few brief hours. And so it is, in another form, with the creation or realisation of the author's, the poet's, fancy. In this latter case the actor, the poet actor, sees and creates in the air before him the being he delineates; he makes him, he builds him during the day, in the long hours of the night; the character gradually takes being; he is the actor's genius;

the slave of the ring, who comes when he calls him, stands beside him, and envelops him in his ghostly arms; the actor's personality disappears; he is the character. You, you, and you, and all of you, have the right to object to the actor's creation; you may say this is not your conception of Hamlet or Macbeth or Iago or Richard or Nero or Shylock — but respect his. And who can tell whether he is right or you are right? He has created them with much loving care; therefore don't sneer at them — don't jeer at them — it hurts! If you have reared a rose-bush in your garden, and seen it bud and bloom, are you pleased to have some ruthless vandal tear the flowers from their stem and trample them in the mud? And it is not always our most beautiful children we love the best. The parent's heart will surely warm toward its feeblest child.

The Creation of a Character

It is very evident that any man, be he an actor or no actor, can, with money and with good taste, make what is technically termed a production. There is, as an absolute matter of fact, no particular credit to be attached to the making of a production. The real work of the stage, of the actor, does not lie there. It is easy for us to busy ourselves, to pass pleasantly our time, designing lovely scenes, charming costumes, and all the paraphernalia and pomp of mimic grandeur, whether of land-

scape or of architecture, the panoply of war, or the luxury of royal courts. That is fun — pleasure and amusement. No; the real work of the stage lies in the creation of a character. A great character will live forever, when paint and canvas and silks and satins and gold foil and tinsel shall have gone the way of all rags.

But the long, lone hours with our heads in our hands, the toil, the patient study, the rough carving of the outlines, the dainty, delicate finishing touches, the growing into the soul of the being we delineate, the picture of his outward semblance, his voice, his gait, his speech, all amount to a labour of such stress and strain, of such loving anxiety and care, that they can be compared in my mind only to a mother's pains. And when the child is born it must grow in a few hours to completion, and be exhibited and coldly criticised. How often, how often, have those long months of infinite toil been in vain! How often has the actor led the child of his imagination to the footlights, only to realise that he has brought into the world a weakling or a deformity which may not live! And how often he has sat through the long night brooding over the corpse of this dear figment of his fancy! It has lately become customary with many actor-managers to avoid these pangs of childbirth. They have determinedly declined the responsibility they owe to the poet and the public, and have instead dazzled the eye with a succession of such splendid

pictures that the beholder forgets in a surfeit of the sight the feast that should feed the soul. This is what I am pleased to term talk versus acting. The representative actors in London are much inclined in this direction.

Copy Life

The student may well ask, "What are we to copy, and whom are we to copy?" Don't copy any one; don't copy any individual actor, or his methods. The methods of one actor — the means by which he arrives — cannot always be successfully employed by another. The methods and personality of one actor are no more becoming or suitable or adapted to another than certain gowns worn by women of fashion simply because these gowns are the fashion. In the art of acting, like the art of painting, we must study life — copy life! You will have before you the work of great masters, and you will learn very much from them — quite as much what to avoid as what to follow. No painting is perfect, and no acting is perfect. No actor ever played a part to absolute perfection. It is just as impossible for an actor to simulate nature completely upon the stage as it is impossible for the painter to portray on canvas the waves of the ocean, the raging storm clouds, or the horrors of conflagration.

The nearer the artist gets to nature, the greater he is. We may admire Rubens and Rembrandt and Vandyke and Gainsborough

and Turner, but who will dare to say that any one of their pictures is faultless? We shall learn much from them all, but quite as much what to avoid as what to emulate. But when you discover their faults, do not forget their virtues. Look, and realise what it means to be able to do so much. And the actor's art is even more difficult! For its execution must be immediate and spontaneous. The word is delivered, the action is done, and the picture is painted! Can I pause and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, that is not the way I wanted to do this, or to say that; if you will allow me to try again, I think I can improve upon it?"

Self-Criticism

The most severe critic can never tell me more, or scold me more than I scold myself. I have never left the stage satisfied with myself. And I am convinced that every artist feels as I do about his work. It is the undoubted duty of the critic to criticise, and that means to blame as well as to praise; and it must be confessed that, taking all things into consideration, the critics of this country are actuated by honesty of purpose and kindliness of spirit, and very often their work is, in addition, of marked literary value. Occasionally we will still meet the man who is anxious to impress his fellow citizens with the fact that he has been abroad, and tinctures all his views of plays and actors with references to Herr Dinkelspiegel

or Frau Mitterwoorzer; or who, having spent a few hours in Paris, is forced to drag in by the hair Monsieur Popin or Mademoiselle Fifine. But as a matter of fact, is not the interpretation of tragedy and comedy by the American stage superior to the German and French? — for the whole endeavour in this country has been toward a closer adherence to nature. In France and in Germany the ancient method of declamation still prevails, and the great speeches of Goethe and Schiller and Racine and Corneille are to all intents and purposes intoned. No doubt this sounds very fine in German and French, but how would you like it now in English?

The old-time actor had peculiar and primitive views as to elocution and its uses. I remember a certain old friend of mine, who, when he recited the opening speech in "Richard III.," and arrived at the line "In the deep bosom of the ocean buried," suggested the deep bosom of the ocean by sending his voice down into his boots. Yet these were fine actors, to whom certain young gentlemen, who never saw them, constantly refer. The methods of the stage have completely changed, and with them the tastes of the people. The probability is that some of the old actors of only a few years ago would excite much merriment in their delineation of tragedy. A very great tragedian of a past generation was wont, in the tent scene in "Richard III.," to hold a piece of soap in his mouth, so that, after the appearance of the ghosts, the lather and

froth might dribble down his chin! and he employed, moreover, a trick sword, which rattled hideously; and, what with his foam-flecked face, his rolling eyes, his inarticulate groans, and his rattling blade, the small boy in the gallery was scared into a frenzy of vociferous delight!

Yet, whilst we have discarded these somewhat crude methods, we have perhaps allowed ourselves to wander too far in the other direction, and the critics are quite justified in demanding in many cases greater virility and force. The simulation of suppressed power is very useful and very advisable, but when the firebell rings the horses have got to come out, and rattle and race down the street, and rouse the town!

Discipline Imperative

Whilst we are on the subject of these creations of the poets and the actors, do you understand how important is discipline on the stage? How can an actor be away from this earth, moving before you in the spirit he has conjured up, only to be dragged back to himself and his actual surroundings of canvas and paint and tinsel and limelights by some disturbing influence in the audience or on the stage? If you want the best, if you love the art, foster it. It is worthy of your gentlest care and your kindest, tenderest thought. Your silence is often more indicative of appreciation than your applause. The actor does not need your applause in order to know when you are in sympathy with him.

He feels very quickly whether you are antagonistic or friendly. He cares very little for the money, but a great deal for your affection and esteem. Discipline on the stage has almost entirely disappeared, and year after year the exercise of our art becomes more difficult. I am sorry to say some newspapers are, unwittingly perhaps, largely responsible for this. When an editor discharges a member of his force for any good and sufficient reason — and surely a man must be permitted to manage and control his own business — no paper will publish a two-column article, with appropriate cuts, detailing the wrongs of the discharged journalist, and the hideous crime of the editor! Even an editor — and an editor is supposed to be able to stand almost anything — would become weary after a while; discipline would cease, and your newspapers would be ill-served. Booth, Jefferson, and other actors soon made up their minds that the easiest road was the best for them. Mr. Booth left the stage management entirely to Mr. Lawrence Barrett and others, and Mr. Jefferson praised everybody and everything. But this is not good for the stage. My career on the stage is nearly over, and until, shortly, I bid it farewell, I shall continue to do my best; but we are all doing it under ever-growing difficulties. Actors on the stage are scarce, actors off the stage, as I have demonstrated, I hope, are plentiful. Life insurance presidents — worthy presidents, directors, and

trustees — have been so busy acting their several parts in the past, and are in the present so busy trying to unact them, men are so occupied from their childhood with the mighty dollar, the race for wealth is so strenuous and all-entrancing, that imagination is dying out; and imagination is necessary to make a poet or an actor; the art of acting is the crystallisation of all arts. It is a diamond in the facets of which is mirrored every art. It is, therefore, the most difficult of all arts. The education of a king is barely sufficient for the education of the comprehending and comprehensive actor. If he is to satisfy every one, he should possess the commanding power of a Cæsar, the wisdom of Solomon, the eloquence of Demosthenes, the patience of Job, the face and form of Antinous, and the strength and endurance of Hercules

Dramatic Vicissitudes

The stage is not likely to die of neglect anywhere. But at this moment it cannot be denied that the ship of the stage is drifting somewhat hither and thither. Every breath of air and every current of public opinion impels it first in one direction and then in another. At one moment we may be said to be in the doldrums of the English society drama, or we are sluggishly rolling along in a heavy ground swell, propelled by a passing cat's paw of revivals of old melodramas. Again we catch a very faint northerly breeze from Ibsen, or a southeaster from Maeter-

linck and Hauptmann. Sometimes we set our sails to woo that ever-clearing breeze of Shakespeare, only to be forced out of our course by a sputter of rain, an Irish mist, and half a squall from George Bernard Shaw; but the greater part of the time the ship of the stage is careering wildly under bare poles, with a man lashed to the helm (and let us hope that, like Ulysses, he has cotton wool in his ears), before a hurricane of comic opera. We need a recognised stage and a recognised school. America has become too great, and its influence abroad too large, for us to afford to have recourse to that ancient and easy method of criticism which decries the American and extols the foreign. That is one of those last remnants of colonialism and provincialism which must depart forever.

A National Theatre

What could not be done for the people of this land, were we to have a great and recognised theatre! Consider our speech, and our manner of speech! Consider our voices, and the production of our voices! Consider the pronunciation of words, and the curious use of vowels! Let us say we have an established theatre, to which you come not only for your pleasure, but for your education. Of what immense advantage this would be if behind its presiding officer there stood a board of literary directors, composed of such men as William Winter, Howells, Edward Everett Hale, and Aldrich, and others

equally fine, and the presidents of the great universities. These men might well decide how the American language should be spoken in the great American theatre, and we should then have an authority in this country at last for the pronunciation of certain words. It would finally be decided whether to say fancy or fahncy — dance or dahnce — advertisement or advertysement, and so with many other words; whether to call the object of our admiration "real elegant" — whether we should say "I admire" to do this or that, and whether we should say "I guess" instead of "I think." And the voice! The education of the American speaking voice is, I am sure all will agree, of immense importance. It is difficult to love, or to continue to endure, a woman who shrieks at you; a high-pitched, nasal, stringy voice is not calculated to charm. This established theatre of which we dream should teach men and women how to talk; and how splendid it would be for future generations if it should become characteristic of American men and women to speak in soft and beautifully modulated tones!

These men of whom I have spoken could meet once a year in the great green-room of this theatre of my imagination, and decide upon the works to be produced — the great classics, the tragedies and comedies; and living authors should be invited and encouraged. Here, again, we should have at last what we so badly need, an encouragement for men and women

to write poetry for the stage. Nothing by way of the beautiful seems to be written for us to-day, but perhaps the acknowledgment and the hall-mark of a great theatre might prove an incentive.

Training the Actor

The training of the actor! To-day there is practically none. Actors and actresses are not to be taught by patting them on the shoulders and saying, "Fine! Splendid!" It is a hard, hard school, on the contrary, of unmerciful criticism. And he is a poor master who seeks cheap popularity amongst his associates by glossing over and praising what he knows to be condemnable. No good result is to be obtained by this method, but it is this method which has caused a great many actors to be beloved, and the public to be very much distressed.

As for the practical side of an established theatre, I am absolutely convinced that the national theatre could be established in this country on a practical and paying basis; and not only on a paying basis, but upon a profitable basis. It would, however, necessitate the investment of a large amount of capital. In short, the prime cost would be large, but if the public generally is interested, there is no reason why an able financier could not float a company for this purpose. But under no circumstances must or can a national theatre, in the proper

use of the term, be made an object of personal or commercial profit. Nor can it be a scheme devised by a few individuals for the exploitation of a social or literary fad. The national theatre must be given by the people to the people, and be governed by the people. The members of the national theatre should be elected by the board of directors, and should be chosen from the American and British stage alike, or from any country where English is the language of the people. Every inducement should be offered to secure the services of the best actors; by actors, I mean actors of both sexes; and those who have served for a certain number of years should be entitled to a pension upon retirement.

It is not necessary to bother with further details; I only mention this to impress the reader with the fact that the national theatre is a practical possibility. From my personal experience I am convinced that serious effort upon the American stage meets with a hearty endorsement.

TOMMASO SALVINI

[During his American tour of 1882–1883, Salvini played in Boston. One of his auditors, Henry James, the distinguished novelist, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for March, 1883, gave a detailed criticism of the performances. Of Salvini's Othello he said:

. . . "What an immense impression — simply as an impression — the actor makes on the spectator who sees him for the first time as the turbaned and deep-voiced Moor! He gives us his measure as a man; he acquaints us with that luxury of perfect confidence in the physical resources of the actor which is not the most frequent satisfaction of the modern play-goer. His powerful, active, manly frame, his noble, serious, vividly expressive face, his splendid smile, his Italian eye, his superb, voluminous voice, his carriage, his ease, the assurance he instantly gives that he holds the whole part in his hands and can make of it exactly what he chooses, — all this descends upon the spectator's mind with a richness which immediately converts attention into faith, and expectation into sympathy. He is a magnificent creature, and you are already on his side. His generous temperament is contagious; you find yourself looking at him, not so much as an actor, but as a hero. . . . The admirable thing in this nature of Salvini's is that his intelligence is equal to his material powers; so that if the exhibition is, as it were, personal, it is not simply physical. He has a great imagination; there is a noble intention in all he does. . . ."

The pages which now follow, taken from Salvini's Autobiography, are presented with the permission of his publishers, the Century Company, New York. — Ed.]

First Appearance

The Bon and Berlaffa Company, in which my father was engaged, alternated in its reper-

tory between the comedies of Goldoni and the tragedies of Alfieri.

One evening the "Donne Curiose" by Goldoni was to be given, but the actor who was to take the harlequin's part, represented in that piece by a stupid slave called Pasquino, fell sick a few hours before the curtain was to rise. The company had been together for a few days only, and it was out of the question to substitute another play. It had been decided to close the theatre for that night, when Berlaffa asked:

"Why could n't your Tom take the part?"

My father said that there was no reason why he should n't, but that Tom had never appeared in public, and he did n't know whether he had the courage.

The proposition was made to me, and I accepted on the spot, influenced to no little extent by a desire to please the managers, who in my eyes were people of great importance. Within three hours, with my iron memory, I had easily mastered my little part of Pasquino, and, putting on the costume of the actor who had fallen ill, I found myself a full-fledged if a new performer. I was to speak in the Venetian dialect; that was inconvenient for me rather than difficult, but at Forte, where we were, any slip of pronunciation would hardly be observed.

It was the first time that I was to go on the stage behind the dazzling footlights, the first time that I was to speak in an unaccustomed dialect, dressed up in ridiculous clothes which

were not my own; and I confess that I was so much frightened that I was tempted to run back to my dressing-room, to take off my costume, and to have nothing more to do with the play. But my father, who was aware of my submissive disposition toward him, with a few words kept me at my post.

"For shame!" said he; "a man has no right to be afraid." A man! I was scarce fourteen, yet I aspired to that title.

The conscript who is for the first time under fire feels a sense of fear. Nevertheless, if he has the pride of his sex, and the dignity of one who appreciates his duty, he stands firm, though it be against his will. So it was with me when I began my part. When I perceived that some of Pasquino's lines were amusing the audience, I took courage, and, like a little bird making its first flight, I arrived at the goal, and was eager to try again. As it turned out, my actor's malady grew worse, so that he was forced to leave the company, and I was chosen to take his place.

I must have had considerable aptitude for such comic parts as those of stupid servants, for everywhere that we went I became the public's Benjamin. I made the people laugh, and they asked for nothing better. All were surprised that, young and inexperienced as I was, I should have so much cleverness of manner and such sureness of delivery. My father was more surprised than anybody, for he had expected far less of my immaturity and total lack

of practice. It is certain that from that time I began to feel that I was somebody. I had become useful, or at least I thought I had, and, as a consequence, in my manner and bearing I began to affect the young man more than was fitting in a mere boy. I sought to figure in the conversation of grown people, and many a time I had the pain of seeing my elders smile at my remarks. It was my great ambition to be allowed to walk alone in the city streets; my father was very loath to grant this boon, but he let me go sometimes, perhaps to get a sample of my conduct. I don't remember ever doing anything at these times which could have displeased him; I was particularly careful about it, since I saw him sad, pensive, and afflicted owing to the misfortune which had befallen him, and soon he began to accord me his confidence, which I was most anxious to gain.

A Father's Advice

Often he spoke to me of the principles of dramatic art, and of the mission of the artist. He told me that to have the right to call one's self an artist one must add honest work to talent, and he put before me the example of certain actors who had risen to fame, but who were repulsed by society on account of the triviality of their conduct; of others who were brought by dissipation to die in a hospital, blamed by all; and of still others who had fallen so low as to hold out their hands for alms, or to sponge

on their comrades and to cozen them out of their money for unmerited subscriptions — all of which things moved me to horror and deep repugnance. It was with good reason that my father was called "Honest Beppo" by his fellows on the stage. The incorruptibility and firmness of principle which he cultivated in me from the time that I grew old enough to understand have been my spur and guide throughout my career, and it is through no merit of my own that I can count myself among those who have won the esteem of society; I attribute all the merit to my father. He was conscientious and honest to a scruple; so much so that of his own free will he sacrificed the natural pride of the dramatic artist, and renounced the well-earned honour of first place in his own company to take second place with Gustavo Modena, whose artistic merit he recognised as superior to his own, in order that I might profit by the instruction of that admirable actor and sterling citizen. My father preferred his son's advantage to his own personal profit.

How Salvini Studied His Art

The parts in which I won the most sympathy from the Italian public were those of Oreste in the tragedy of that name, Egisto in "Merope," Romeo in "Giulietta e Romeo," Paolo in "Francesca da Rimini," Rinaldo in "Pia di Tolommei," Lord Bonfield in "Pamela," Domingo in the "Suonatrice d'Arpa," and Gian Galeazzo in

"Lodovico il Moro." In all these my success was more pronounced than in other parts, and I received flattering marks of approval. I did not reflect, at that time, of how great assistance to me it was to be constantly surrounded by first-rate artists; but I soon came to feel that an atmosphere untainted by poisonous microbes promotes unoppressed respiration, and that in such an atmosphere soul and body maintain themselves healthy and vigorous. I observed frequently in the "scratch" companies, which played in the theatres of second rank young men and women who showed very notable artistic aptitude, but who, for lack of cultivation and guidance, ran to extravagance, over-emphasis, and exaggeration. Up to that time, while I had a clear appreciation of the reasons for recognising defects in others, I did not know how to correct my own; on the other hand, I recognised that the applause accorded me was intended as an encouragement more than as a tribute which I had earned. From a youth of pleasing qualities (for the moment I quell my modesty), with good features, full of fire and enthusiasm, with a harmonious and powerful voice, and with good intellectual faculties, the public deemed that an artist should develop who would distinguish himself, and perhaps attain eminence in the records of Italian art; and for this reason it sought to encourage me, and to apply the spur to my pride by manifesting its feeling of sympathy. By

good fortune I had enough conscience and good sense to receive this homage at its just value. I felt the need of studying, not books alone, but men and things, vice and virtue, love and hate, humility and haughtiness, gentleness and cruelty, folly and wisdom, poverty and opulence, avarice and lavishness, long-suffering and vengeance — in short, all the passions for good and evil which have root in human nature. I needed to study out the manner of rendering these passions in accordance with the race of the men in whom they were exhibited, in accordance with their special customs, principles, and education; I needed to form a conception of the movement, the manner, the expressions of face and voice characteristic of all these cases; I must learn by intuition to grasp the characters of fiction, and by study to reproduce those of history with semblance of truth, seeking to give to every one a personality distinct from every other. In fine, I must become capable of identifying myself with one or another personage to such an extent as to lead the audience into the illusion that the real personage, and not a copy, is before them. It would then remain to learn the mechanism of my art; that is, to choose the salient points and to bring them out, to calculate the effects and keep them in proportion with the unfolding of the plot, to avoid monotony in intonation and repetition in accentuation, to insure precision and distinctness in pronuncia-

tion, the proper distribution of respiration, and incisiveness of delivery. I must study; study again; study always. It was not an easy thing to put these precepts into practice. Very often I forgot them, carried away by excitement, or by the superabundance of my vocal powers; indeed, until I had reached an age of calmer reflection I was never able to get my artistic chronometer perfectly regulated; it would always gain a few minutes every twenty-four hours.

Faults in Acting

In my assiduous reading of the classics, the chief places were held among the Greeks by the masculine and noble figures of Hector, Achilles, Theseus, Œdipus; among the Scots by Trenmor, Fingal, Cuchullin; and among the Romans by Cæsar, Brutus, Titus, and Cato. These characters influenced me to incline toward a somewhat bombastic system of gesticulation and a turgid delivery. My anxiety to enter to the utmost into the conceptions of my authors, and to interpret them clearly, disposed me to exaggerate the modulations of my voice like some mechanism which responds to every touch, not reflecting that the abuse of this effort would bring me too near to song. Precipitation in delivery, too, which when carried too far destroys all distinctness and incisiveness, was due to my very high impressionability, and to the straining after technical scenic effects. Thus, extreme vehemence in anger would excite me to

the point of forgetting the fiction, and cause me to commit involuntarily lamentable outbursts. Hence I applied myself to overcome the tendency to singsong in my voice, the exuberance of my rendering of passion, the exclamatory quality of my phrasing, the precipitation of my pronunciation, and the swagger of my motions.

I shall be asked how the public could abide me, with all these defects; and I answer that the defects, though numerous, were so little prominent that they passed unobserved by the mass of the public, which always views broadly and could be detected only by the acute and searching eye of the intelligent critic. I make no pretence that I was able to correct myself all at once. Sometimes my impetuosity would carry me away, and not until I had come to mature age was I able to free myself to any extent from this failing. Then I confirmed myself in my opinion that the applause of the public is not all refined gold, and I became able to separate the gold from the dross in the crucible of intelligence. How many on the stage are content with the dross!

The Desire to Excel in Everything

My desire to improve in my art had its origin in my instinctive impulse to rise above mediocrity — an instinct that must have been born in me, since, when still a little boy, I used to put forth all my energies to eclipse what I saw accomplished by my companions of like age. When I was sixteen, and at Naples, there

were in the boarding-house, at two francs and a half a day, two young men who were studying music and singing, and to surpass them in their own field I practised the scales until I could take B natural. Later on, when the tone of my voice had lowered to the barytone, impelled always by my desire to accomplish something, I took lessons in music from the Maestro Terziani, and appeared at a benefit with the famous tenor Boucardé, and Signora Monti, the soprano, and sang in a duet from "Belisaria," the aria from "Maria di Rohan,"and "La Settimana d'Amore," by Niccolai; and I venture to say that I was not third best in that triad. But I recognised that singing and declamation were incompatible pursuits, since the method of producing the voice is totally different, and they must therefore be mutually harmful. Financially, I was not in a condition to be free to choose between the two careers, and I persevered of necessity in the dramatic profession. Whether my choice was for the best I do not know; it is certain that if my success had been in proportion to my love of music, and I have reason to believe that it might have been, I should not have remained in obscurity.

A Model for Othello

[In 1871, Salvini organised a company for a tour in South America. On his way thither he paused at Gibraltar, and gainfully.]

At Gibraltar I spent my time studying the Moors. I was much struck by one very fine

figure, majestic in walk, and Roman in face, except for a slight projection of the lower lip. The man's colour was between copper and coffee, not very dark, and he had a slender moustache, and scanty curled hair on his chin. Up to that time I had always made up Othello simply with my moustache, but after seeing that superb Moor I added the hair on the chin, and sought to copy his gestures, movements, and carriage. Had I been able I should have imitated his voice also, so closely did that splendid Moor represent to me the true type of the Shakespearian hero. Othello must have been a son of Mauritania, if we can argue from Iago's words to Roderigo: "He goes into Mauritania"; for what else could the author have intended to imply but that the Moor was returning to his native land?

First Trip to the United States

After a few months of rest [after the South American tour], I resolved to get together a new company, selecting those actors and actresses who were best suited to my repertory. The excellent Isolina Piamonti was my leading lady; and my brother Alessandro, an experienced, conscientious, and versatile artist, supported me. An Italian theatrical speculator proposed to me a tour in North America, to include the chief cities of the United States, and although I hesitated not a little on account of the ignorance of the Italian language prevailing in that country, I accepted, influenced somewhat by my desire

to visit a region which was wholly unknown to me. Previous to crossing the ocean I had several months before me, and these served me to get my company in training.

My first impressions of New York were most favourable. Whether it was the benefit of a more vivifying atmosphere, or the comfort of the national life, or whether it was admiration for that busy, industrious, work-loving people, or the thousands of beautiful women whom I saw in the streets, free and proud in carriage, and healthy and lively in aspect, or whether it was the thought that these citizens were the great-grandchildren of those high-souled men who had known how to win with their blood the independence of their country, I felt as if I had been born again to a new existence. My lungs swelled more freely as I breathed the air impregnated with so much vigour and movement, and so much liberty, and I could fancy that I had come back to my life of a youth of twenty, and was treading the streets of republican Rome. With a long breath of satisfaction I said to myself: "Ah, here is life!" Within a few days my energy was redoubled. A lively desire of movement, not a usual thing with me, had taken possession of me in spite of myself. Without asking myself why, I kept going here and there, up and down, to see everything, to gain information; and when I returned to my rooms in the evening, I could have set out again to walk still more. This

taught me why Americans are so unwearied and full of business. Unfortunately I have never mastered English sufficiently to converse in that tongue; had I possessed that privilege, perhaps my stay in North America would not have been so short, and perhaps I might have figured on the English stage. What an enjoyment it would have been to me to play Shakespeare in English! But I have never had the privilege of the gift of tongues, and I had to content myself with my own Italian, which is understood by but few in America. This, however, mattered little; they understood me all the same, or, to put it better, they caught by intuition my ideas and my sentiments.

My first appearance was in "Othello." The public received a strong impression, without discussing whether or not the means which I used to cause it were accceptable, and without forming a clear conception of my interpretation of that character, or pronouncing openly upon its form. The same people who had heard it the first night returned on the second, on the third, and even on the fourth, to make up their minds whether the emotions they experienced resulted from the novelty of my interpretation, or whether in fact it was the true sentiment of Othello's passions which was transmitted to them — in short, whether it was a mystification or a revelation. By degrees the public became convinced that those excesses of jealousy and fury were appropriate to the son

of the desert, and that one of Southern blood must be much better qualified to interpret them than a Northerner. The judgment was discussed, criticised, disputed; but in the end the verdict was overwhelmingly in my favour. When the American has once said "Yes," he never weakens; he will always preserve for you the same esteem, sympathy, and affection. After New York I travelled through a number of American cities — Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Washington, and Boston, which is rightly styled the Athens of America, for there artistic taste is most refined. In Boston I had the good fortune to become intimately acquainted with the illustrious poet, Longfellow, who talked to me in the pure Tuscan. I saw, too, other smaller cities, and then I appeared again in New York, where the favour of the public was confirmed, not only for me, but also for the artists of my company, and especially for Isolina Piamonti, who received no uncertain marks of esteem and consideration. We then proceeded to Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Toledo, and that pleasant city, Detroit, continuing to Chicago, and finally to New Orleans.

In Cuba

From New Orleans we sailed to Havana, but found in Cuba civil war, and a people that had but small appetite for serious things, and was moreover alarmed by a light outbreak

of yellow fever. One of my company was taken down with the disease, but I had the pleasure of seeing him recover. Luckily he had himself treated by Havanese physicians, who are accustomed to combat that malady, which they know only too well. Perhaps my comrade would have lost his life under the ministrations of an Italian doctor. In the city of sugar and tobacco, too, it was "Othello" which carried off the palm. Those good manufacturers of cigars presented me on my benefit with boxes of their wares, which were made expressly for me, and which I dispatched to Italy for the enjoyment of my friends. In spite of the many civilities which were tendered to me, in spite of considerable money profit, and of the ovations of its kind-hearted people, I did not find Cuba to my taste. Sloth and luxury reign there supreme.

Appearance in London

In Paris I found a letter from the impresario Mapleson, who proposed that I should go to London with an Italian company, and play at Drury Lane on the off-nights of the opera. I was in doubt for a considerable time whether to challenge the verdict of the British public; but in two weeks after reaching Italy, by dint of telegrams I had got together the force of artists necessary, and I presented myself with arms and baggage in London, in the spring of 1875.

Hardly had I arrived, when I noticed the posting, on the bill-boards of the city, of the announcement of the seventy-second night of "Hamlet" at the Lyceum Theatre, with Henry Irving in the title-rôle. I had contracted with Mapleson to give only three plays in my season, "Othello," "The Gladiator," and "Hamlet," the last having been insisted upon by Mapleson himself, who, as a speculator, well knew that curiosity as to a comparison would draw the public to Drury Lane.

Impressions of Irving's "Hamlet"

I was very anxious to see the illustrious English artist in that part, and I secured a box and went to the Lyceum. I was recognised by nobody, and remaining as it were concealed in my box, I had a good opportunity to satisfy my curiosity. I arrived at the theatre a little too late, so that I missed the scene of Hamlet in presence of the ghost of his father, the scene which in my judgment contains the clue to that strange character, and from which all the synthetic ideas of Hamlet are developed. I was in time to hear only the last words of the oath of secrecy. I was struck by the perfection of the stage-setting. There was a perfect imitation of the effect of moonlight, which at the proper times flooded the stage with its rays or left it in darkness. Every detail was excellently and exactly reproduced. The scene was shifted, and Hamlet began his allusions, his sallies of

sarcasm, his sententious sayings, his points of satire with the courtiers, who sought to study and to penetrate the sentiments of the young prince. In this scene Irving was simply sublime. His mobile face mirrored his thoughts. The subtle penetration of his phrases, so perfect in shading and incisiveness, showed him to be a master of art. I do not believe there is an actor who can stand beside him in this respect, and I was so much impressed by it, that at the end of the second act I said to myself, "I will not play Hamlet! Mapleson can say what he likes, but I will not play it"; and I said it with the fullest resolution. In the monologue, "To be or not to be," Irving was admirable; in the scene with Ophelia he was deserving of the highest praise; in that of the Players he was moving, and in all this part of the play he appeared to my eyes to be the most perfect interpreter of that eccentric character. But further on it was not so, and for the sake of art I regretted it. From the time when the passion assumes a deeper hue, and reasoning moderates impulses which are forcibly curbed, Irving seemed to me to show mannerism, and to be lacking in power, and strained, and it is not in him alone that I find this fault, but in nearly all foreign actors. There seems to be a limit of passion within which they remain true in their rendering of nature; but beyond that limit they become transformed, and take on conventionality in their intonations, exaggeration

in their gestures, and mannerism in their bearing. I left my box saying to myself: "I too can do Hamlet, and I will try it!" In some characters Irving is exceptionally fine. I am convinced that it would be difficult to interpret Shylock or Mephistopheles better than he. He is most skilful in putting his productions on the stage; and in addition to his intelligence he does not lack the power to communicate his counsels or his teachings. Withal he is an accomplished gentleman in society, and is loved and respected by his fellow-citizens, who justly look upon him as a glory to their country. He should, however, for his own sake, avoid playing such parts as Romeo and Macbeth, which are not adapted to his somewhat scanty physical and vocal power.

The Decline of Tragedy

The traditions of the English drama are imposing and glorious! Shakespeare alone has gained the highest pinnacle of fame in dramatic art. He has had to interpret him such great artists as Garrick, Kemble, Kean, Macready, Siddons, and Irving; and the literary and dramatic critics of the whole world have studied and analysed both author and actor. At present, however, tragedy is abandoned on almost all the stages of Europe. Actors who devote themselves to tragedy, whether classical romantic, or historical, no longer exist. Society-comedy has overflowed the stage, and the inundation causes the seed to rot which

more conscientious and prudent planters had sown in the fields of art. It is desirable that the feeling and taste for the works of the great dramatists should be revived in Europe, and that England, which is for special reasons, and with justice, proud of enjoying the primacy in dramatic composition, should have also worthy and famous actors. I do not understand why the renown and prestige of the great name of Garrick do not attract modern actors to follow in his footsteps. Do not tell me that the works of Shakespeare are out of fashion, and that the public no longer wants them. Shakespeare is always new — so new that not even yet is he understood by everybody, and if, as they say, the public is no longer attracted by his plays, it is because they are superficially presented. To win the approval of the audience, a dazzling and conspicuous mise-en-scene does not suffice, as some seem to imagine, to make up deficiency in interpretation; a more profound study of the characters represented is indispensable. If in art you can join the beautiful and the good, so much the better for you; but if you give the public the alternative, it will always prefer the good to the beautiful.

Tragedy in Two Languages

In 1880 the agent of an impresario and theatre-owner of Boston came to Florence to make me the proposal that I should go to North

America for the second time, to play in Italian supported by an American company. I thought the man had lost his senses. But after a time I became convinced that he was in his right mind, and that no one would undertake a long and costly journey simply to play a joke, and I took his extraordinary proposition into serious consideration and asked him for explanations.

"The idea is this," the agent made answer; "it is very simple. You found favour the last time with the American public with your Italian company, when not a word that was said was understood, and the proprietor of the Globe Theatre of Boston thinks that if he puts with you English-speaking actors, you will yourself be better understood, since all the dialogues of your supporters will be plain. The audience will concern itself only with following you with the aid of the play-books in both languages, and will not have to pay attention to the others, whose words it will understand."

"But how shall I take my cue, since I do not understand English? And how will your American actors know when to speak, since they do not know Italian?"

"Have no anxiety about that," said the agent. "Our American actors are mathematicians, and can memorise perfectly the last words of your speeches, and they will work with the precision of machines.

"I am ready to admit that," said I, "although I do not think it will be so easy; but it will in

any case be much easier for them, who will have to deal with me alone, and will divide the difficulty among twenty or twenty-four. than for me, who must take care of all."

The persevering agent, however, closed my mouth with the words, "You do not sign yourself 'Salvini' for nothing!" He had an answer for everything, he was prepared to convince me at all points, to persuade me about everything, and to smooth over every difficulty, and he won a consent which, though almost involuntary on my part, was legalised by a contract in due form, by which I undertook to be at New York not later than November 15, 1880, and to be ready to open at Philadelphia with "Othello" on the 29th of the same month.

I was still dominated by my bereavement, and the thought was pleasant to me of going away from places which constantly brought it back to my mind. Another sky, other customs, another language, grave responsibilities, a novel and difficult undertaking of uncertain outcome — I was willing to risk all simply to distract my attention and to forget. I have never in my life been a gambler, but that time I staked my artistic reputation upon a single card. Failure would have been a new emotion, severe and grievous, it is true, but still different from that which filled my mind. I played, and I won! The friends whom I had made in the United States in 1873, and with whom I had kept up my acquaintance, when they learned of

the confusion of tongues, wrote me discouraging letters. In Italy the thing was not believed, so eccentric did it seem. I arrived in New York nervous and feverish, but not discouraged or depressed.

When the day of the first rehearsal came, all the theatres were occupied, and I had to make the best of a rather large concert-hall to try to get into touch with the actors who were to support me. An Italian who was employed in a newspaper office served me as interpreter in coöperation with the agent of my Boston impresario. The American artists began the rehearsal without a prompter, and with a sureness to be envied especially by our Italian actors, who usually must have every word suggested to them. My turn came, and the few words which Othello pronounces in the first scene came in smoothly and without difficulty. When the scene with the Council of Ten came, of a sudden I could not recall the first line of a paragraph, and I hesitated; I began a line, but it was not that; I tried another with no better success; a third, but the interpreter told me that I had gone wrong. We began again, but the English was of no assistance to me in recognising which of my speeches corresponded to that addressed to me, which I did not understand. I was all at sea, and I told the interpreter to beg the actors to overlook my momentary confusion, and to say to them that I should be all right in five minutes. I went

off to a corner of the hall and bowed my head between my hands, saying to myself, "I have come for this, and I must carry it through." I set out to number mentally all the paragraphs of my part, and in a short time I said. "Let us begin again."

During the remainder of the rehearsal one might have thought that I understood English, and that the American actors understood Italian. No further mistake was made by either side; there was not even the smallest hesitation, and when I finished the final scene of the third act between Othello and Iago, the actors applauded, filled with joy and pleasure. The exactitude with which the subsequent rehearsals of "Othello," and those of "Hamlet," proceeded was due to the memory, the application, and the scrupulous attention to their work of the American actors, as well as to my own force of will and practical acquaintance with all the parts of the play, and to the natural intuition which helped me to know without understanding what was addressed to me, divining it from a motion, a look, or a light inflection of the voice. Gradually a few words, a few short phrases, remained in my ear, and in course of time I came to understand perfectly every word of all the characters; I became so sure of myself that if an actor substituted one word for another I perceived it. I understood the words of Shakespeare, but not those of the spoken language.

In a few days we went to Philadelphia to begin our representations. My old acquaintances were in despair. To those who had sought to discourage me by their letters others on the spot joined their influence, and tried everything to overthrow my courage. I must admit that the nearer came the hour of the great experiment, the more my anxiety grew and inclined me to deplore the moment when I had put myself in that dilemma. I owe it in a great degree to my cool head that my discouraging forebodings did not unman me so much as to make me abandon myself wholly to despair. Just as I was going on the stage, I said to myself: "After all, what can happen to me? They will not murder me. I shall have tried, and I shall have failed; that is all there will be to it. I will pack up my baggage and go back to Italy, convinced that oil and wine will not mix," A certain contempt of danger, a firm resolution to succeed, and, I am bound to add, considerable confidence in myself, enabled me to go before the public calm, bold, and secure.

The first scene before the palace of Brabantio was received with sepulchral silence. When that of the Council of Ten came, and the narration of the vicissitudes of Othello was ended, the public broke forth in prolonged applause. Then I said to myself, "A good beginning is half the work." At the close of the first act, my adversaries, who were such solely on account

of their love of art, and their belief that the two languages could not be amalgamated, came on the stage to embrace and congratulate me, surprised, enchanted, enthusiastic, happy, that they had been mistaken, and throughout the play I was the object of constant demonstrations of sympathy.

American Critical Taste

From Philadelphia we went to New York where our success was confirmed. It remained for me to win the suffrages of Boston, and I secured them, first having made stops in Brooklyn, New Haven, and Hartford. When in the American Athens I became convinced that that city possesses the most refined artistic taste. Its theatrical audiences are serious, attentive to details, analytical — I might almost say scientific — and one might fancy that such careful critics had never in their lives done anything but occupy themselves with scenic art. With reference to a presentation of Shakespeare, they are profound, acute, subtle, and they know so well how to clothe some traditional principle in close logic, that if faith in the opposite is not quite unshakable in an artist, he must feel himself tempted to renounce his own tenets. It is surprising that in a land where industry and commerce seem to absorb all the intelligence of the people, there should be in every city and district, indeed in every village, people who are competent to discuss the arts with such

high authority. The American nation counts only a century of freedom, yet it has produced a remarkable number of men of high competence in dramatic art. Those who think of tempting fortune by displaying their untried artistic gifts on the American stage, counting on the ignorance or inexperience of their audience, make a very unsafe calculation. The taste and critical faculty of that public are in their fulness of vigour. Old Europe is more bound by traditions, more weary, more blasé, in her judgment, not always sincere or disinterested. In America the national pride is warmly felt, and the national artists enjoy high honour. The Americans know how to offer an exquisite hospitality, but woe to the man who seeks to impose on them! They profess a cult, a veneration, for those who practise our art, whether of their own nation or foreign, and their behaviour in the theatre is dignified. I recall one night when upon invitation I went to see a new play in which appeared an actor of reputation. The play was not liked, and from act to act I noticed that the house grew more and more scanty, like a faded rose which loses its petals one by one, until at the last scene my box was the only one which remained occupied. I was more impressed by this silent demonstration of hostility than I should have been if the audience had made a tumultuous expression of its disapproval. The actors were humiliated and confounded, and as the curtain fell an instinc-

tive sentiment of compassion induced me to applaud.

Impressions of Edwin Booth

The celebrated actor Edwin Booth was at this time in Baltimore, a city distant two hours from the capital. I had heard so much about this superior artist that I was anxious to see him, and on one of my off nights I went to Baltimore with my impresario's agent. A box had been reserved for me without my knowledge, and was draped with the Italian colours. I regretted to be made so conspicuous, but I could not fail to appreciate the courteous and complimentary desire to do me honour shown by the American artist. It was only natural that I should be most kindly influenced toward him, but without the courtesy which predisposed me in his favour he would equally have won my sympathy by his attractive and artistic lineaments, and his graceful and well-proportioned figure. The play was "Hamlet." This part brought him great fame, and justly; for in addition to the high artistic worth with which he adorned it, his elegant personality was admirably adapted to it. His long and wavy hair, his large and expressive eye, his youthful and flexible movements, accorded perfectly with the ideal of the young prince of Denmark which now obtains everywhere. His splendid delivery, and the penetrating philosophy with which he informed his phrases, were his most remark-

able qualities. I was so fortunate as to see him also as Richelieu and Iago, and in all three of these parts, so diverse in their character I found him absolutely admirable. I cannot say so much for his Macbeth, which I saw one night when passing through Philadelphia. The part seemed to me not adapted to his nature. Macbeth was an ambitious man, and Booth was not. Macbeth had barbarous and ferocious instincts, and Booth was agreeable, urbane, and courteous. Macbeth destroyed his enemies traitorously — did this even to gain possession of their goods — while Booth was noble, lofty-minded, and generous of his wealth. It is thus plain that however much art he might expend, his nature rebelled against his portrayal of that personage, and he could never hope to transform himself into the ambitious, venal, and sanguinary Scottish king.

I should say, from what I heard in America, that Edwin Forrest was the Modena of America. The memory of that actor still lives, for no one has possessed equally the power to give expression to the passions, and to fruitful and burning imagery, in addition to which he possessed astonishing power of voice. Almost contemporaneously a number of most estimable actors have laid claim to his mantle; but above them all Edwin Booth soared as an eagle.

After a very satisfactory experience in Baltimore, I returned for the third time to New York, and gave "Othello," "Macbeth," and "The

Gladiator," each play twice, and made the last two appearances of my season in Philadelphia. After playing ninety-five times in the new fashion, I felt myself worn out, but fully satisfied with the result of my venturesome undertaking. When I embarked on the steamer which was to take me to Europe, I was escorted by all the artists of the company which had coöperated in my happy success, by my friends, and by courteous admirers, and I felt that if I were not an Italian I should wish to be an American.

ADELAIDE RISTORI

[George Henry Lewes, in his book on "Actors and the Art of Acting," published by Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1878, says:

"I must repeat the expression of my admiration for Ristori as a distinguished actress; if not of the highest rank, she is very high, in virtue of her personal gifts, and the trained skill with which these gifts are applied. The question naturally arises, why is her success so great in certain plays and so dubious in others? It is of little use to say that Lady Macbeth and Adrienne Lecouvreur are beyond her powers; that is only restating the fact. Can we not trace both success and failure to one source? In what is called the ideal drama, constructed after the Greek type, she would be generally successful, because the simplicity of its motives and the artificiality of its structure, removing it from beyond the region of ordinary experience, demand from the actor a corresponding artificiality. Attitudes, draperies, gestures, tones, and elocution which would be incongruous in a drama approaching more closely to the evolutions of ordinary experience, become, in the ideal drama, artistic modes of expression; and it is in these that Ristori displays a fine selective instinct, and a rare felicity of organisation."

"Memoirs and Artistic Studies of Adelaide Ristori," rendered into English by G. Mantellini with a biographical appendix by L. D. Ventura, was published and copyrighted by Doubleday, Page & Co., New York, 1907. The chapters of that volume afford the pages which follow. The Artistic Studies comprise detailed histrionic interpretations of the chief rôles of Ristori: Mary Stuart, Queen Elizabeth, Lady Macbeth, Medea, Myrrha and Phædra.—Ed.]

First Appearances

When twelve years old, I was booked with the famous actor and manager, Giuseppe Moncalvo,

for the rôles of a child. Soon after, owing to my slender figure, they made me up as a little woman, giving me small parts as maid. But they soon made up their minds that I was not fitted for such parts. Having reached the age of thirteen and developed in my figure, I was assigned several parts as second lady. In those days they could not be too particular in small companies. At the age of fourteen, I had to recite the first part among the young girls and that of the leading lady alternately, like an experienced actress. It was about this time, in the city of Novara (Piedmont) that I recited for the first time the "Francesca da Rimini" of Silvio Pellico. Though I was only fifteen my success was such that soon afterward they offered me the parts of leading lady with encouragement of advancement.

My good father, who was gifted with a great deal of sense, did not allow his head to be turned by such offers. Reflecting that my health might suffer from being thrown so early into the difficulties of stage life he refused these offers and accepted a more modest place, as *ingenue*, in the Royal Company, under the auspices of the King of Sardinia and stationed during several months of the year at Turin. It was managed by the leading man, the most intelligent and capable among the stage managers of the time. The advice of this cultured, though severe man, rendered his management noteworthy and sought after as essential to the making of a good actor.

Among the members of the company shone the foremost beacon-lights of Italian art, such as Vestri, Madame Marchionni, Romagnoli, Righetti, and many others who were quoted as examples of dramatic art, as well as Pasta, Malibran, Rubini, and Tamburini in the lyric art.

My engagement for the part of *ingenue* was to have lasted three years, but, after the year, I was promoted to the parts of the first lady, and in the third year, to the absolute leading lady.

To such unhoped-for and flattering results I was able to attain, by ascending step by step through the encouragement and admonition of my excellent teacher, Madame Carlotta Marchionni, a distinguished actress, and the interest of Gaetano Bazzi who also had great affection for me. It was really then that my artistic education began. It was then that I acquired the knowledge and the rules which placed me in a position to discern the characteristics of a true artist. I learned to distinguish and to delineate the comic and the dramatic passions. My temperament caused me to incline greatly toward the tender and the gentle. However,in the tragic parts, my vigour increased, I learned to portray transitions for the sake of fusing the different contrasts; a capital but difficult study of detail, tedious at times, but of the greatest importance. The lamentations in a part where two extreme and opposing passions

are at play, are like those which in painting are called "chiaro-oscuro," a blending of the tones, which thus portrays truth devoid of artifice.

In order to succeed in this intent, it is necessary to take as model the great culture of art, and also to be gifted with a well-tempered and artistic nature. And these are not to be confined to sterile imitation, but are for the purpose of accumulating the rich material of dramatic erudition, so that one may present oneself before the audiences as an original and artistic individuality.

Some people think that distinction of birth and a perfect education will render them capable of appearing upon the stage with the same facility and nonchalance with which one enters a ball-room, and they are not at all timid about walking upon the boards, presuming that they can do it as well as an actor who has been raised upon them. A great error!

One of the greatest difficulties that they meet is in not knowing how to walk upon a stage, which, owing to the slight inclination in construction, easily causes the feet to totter, particularly if one is a beginner, and especially at the entrances and exits. I myself encountered this difficulty. Though I had dedicated myself to the art from my infancy and had been instructed with the greatest care every day of my life by my grandmother, at the age of fifteen

my movements had not yet acquired all the ease and naturalness necessary to make me feel at home upon the stage, and certain sudden turns always frightened me.

When I began my artistic apprenticeship, the use of diction was given great importance, as a means of judging an actor. At that time the audience was critical and severe.

In our days, the same audience has become less exacting, less critical, and does not aim to improve the artist, by counting his defects. According to my opinion, the old system was best, as it is not in excessive indulgence and solely by considering the good qualities, without correcting the bad ones, that real artists are made.

It is also my conviction that a person who wishes to dedicate himself to the stage should not begin his career with parts of great importance, either comic, dramatic, or tragic. The interpretation becomes too difficult for a beginner and may harm his future career: first, the discouragement over the difficulties that he meets; secondly, an excessive vanity caused by the appreciation with which the public apparently honours him. Both these sentiments will lead the actor, in a short time, to neglect his study. On the other hand, by taking several parts, he becomes familiar with the means of rendering his part natural, thus convincing himself that by representing correctly characters of little importance, he will be given more important ones

later on. Thus it will come about that his study will be more careful.

Salvini and Rossi

One of the greatest of the living examples of the school of realism is my illustrious fellow artist, Signor Tommaso Salvini, with whom, for a number of years, I had the fortune to share the fatigues and the honours of the profession which I also shared with Ernesto Rossi. The former was and is still admired. His rare dramatic merits have nothing of the conventional, but owe their power to that spontaneity which is the most convincing revelation of art. The wealth of plasticity which Salvini possesses, is in him, a natural gift. Salvini is the true exponent of the Italian dramatic art.

Appears as Lady Macbeth

In the month of June, 1857, we began to rerehearse "Macbeth," at Covent Garden, London, It had been arranged for our company by Mr. Clarke, and translated into most beautiful Italian verse by Giulio Carcano. The renowned Mr. Harris put it on the stage according to English traditions. The representation of the part of Lady Macbeth, which afterward became one of my favourite rôles, preoccupied me greatly, as I knew only too well what kind of comparisons would be made. The remembrance of the marvellous creation of that character as given by the famous Mrs. Siddons and the tradi-

tional criticisms of the press, might have rendered the public very severe and difficult to please.

I used all my ability of interpretation to reveal and transmit the most minute intentions of the author. To the English audience it seemed that I had really incarnated that perfidious but great character of Lady Macbeth, in a way that surpassed all expectations.

We had to repeat the drama for several evenings, always producing a most profound impression upon the minds of the audience, particularly in the grand sleep-walking scene. So thoroughly had I entered into the nature of Lady Macbeth, that during the entire scene my pupils were motionless in their orbit, causing me to shed tears. To this enforced immobility of the eye I owe the weakening of my eyesight. From the analytical study which I shall give of this diabolical character [at the close of her Memoirs] the reader can form for himself an idea of how much its interpretation cost me (particularly in the final culminating scene), in my endeavour to get the right intonation of the voice and the true expression of the physiognomy.

As Manager

My exceptionally good health never abandoned me through my long and tiresome journeys, though unfortunately I never was able to accustom myself to voyaging by sea. All through those rapid changes I acquired a marvellous store of endurance. That sort of life infused in me

sufficient energy to lead me through every kind of hardship with the resolution and authority of a commanding general. All obeyed me. None questioned my authority owing to my absolute impartiality, being always ready, as I was, either to blame or correct him who did not fulfil his obligations, also to praise without any distinction of class those who deserved it. I almost always met with courtesy among the actors under my direction, and if any one of them dared to trouble our harmony, he was instantly put to his proper place by the firmness of my discipline.

The artistic management of the plays was left to me in all its details. Every order and every disposition came from me directly. I looked after all matters large and small, the things that every actor understands contribute to making the success of a play.

Concerning my own personal interests, they were in charge of a private manager.

I am proud to say that my husband was the soul of all my undertakings. As I speak of him, my heart impels me to say that he ever exercised upon me and my professional career the kindest and most benevolent influence. It was he who upheld my courage, whenever I hesitated before some difficulty; it was he who foretold the glory I should acquire, he who pointed out to me the goal, and anticipated everything in order that I should secure it. Without his assistance I never should have been able to put into effect

the daring attempt of carrying the flag of Italian dramatic art all over the globe.

First Visit to America

During the month of September, 1866, for the first time in my life, I crossed the ocean on my way to the United States, where I remained until May 17th of the following year. It was in the elegant Lyceum Theatre of New York that I made my débût, on the 20th of September, with "Medea." I could not anticipate a more enthusiastic reception than the one I was honoured with. I felt anxious to make myself known in that new part of the world, and let the Americans hear me recite for the first time, in the soft and melodic Italian language. I knew that in spite of the prevailing characteristics of the inhabitants of the free country of George Washington, always busy as they are in their feverish pursuit of wealth, that the love for the beautiful and admiration for dramatic art were not neglected. During my first season in New York I met with an increasing success, and formed such friendly relations with many distinguished and cultured people that time and distance have never caused me to forget them. While writing these lines I send an effectionate salutation to all those who in America still honour me with their remembrance.

Begins to Play in English

I made my fourth trip to London in 1873 Not having any new drama to present and

being tired of repeating the same productions, I felt the necessity of reanimating my mind with some strong emotion, of discovering something, in a word, the execution of which had never been attempted by others.

At last I believed I had found something to satisfy my desire. The admiration I had for the Shakespearean dramas, and particularly for the character of Lady Macbeth, inspired me with the idea of playing in English the sleeping scene from "Macbeth," which I think is the greatest conception of the Titanic poet. I was also induced to make this bold attempt, partly as a tribute of gratitude to the English audiences of the great metropolis, who had shown me so much deference. But how was I going to succeed? . . . I took advice from a good friend of mine, Mrs. Ward, the mother of the renowned actress Genevieve Ward. She not only encouraged my idea, but offered her services in helping me to learn how to recite that scene in English.

I still had some remembrance of my study of English when I was a girl, and there is no language more difficult to pronounce and enunciate correctly, for an Italian. I was frightened only to think of that, still I drew sufficient courage even from its difficulties to grapple with my task. After a fortnight of constant study, I found myself ready to make an attempt at my recitation. However, not wishing to compromise my reputation by risking a failure, I acted very cautiously.

I invited to my house the most competent among the dramatic critics of the London papers, without forewarning them of the object and asked them kindly to hear me and express frankly their opinion, assuring them that if it should not be a favourable one, I would not feel badly over it.

I then recited the scene in English, and my judges seemed to be very much pleased. They corrected my pronunciation of two words only, and encouraged me to announce publicly my bold project. The evening of the performance, at the approach of that important scene, I was trembling! . . . The enthusiastic reception granted me by the audience awakened in me all vigour, and the happy success of my effort compensated me a thousandfold for all the anxieties I had gone through. This success still increased my ambitious aspirations, and I wished to try myself in even a greater task. I aimed at no less a project than the impersonation of the entire rôle of Lady Macbeth in English, but such an arduous undertaking seemed so bold to me that I finally gave up the idea and drove away from my mind forever the temptation to try it.

THE ACTOR

Valedictory Stanzas to J. P. Kemble

June, 1817, by Thomas Campbell.

His was the spell o'er hearts
  Which only Acting lends —
The youngest of the sister arts,
  Which all their beauty blends:
For ill can Poetry express
  Full many a tone of thought sublime,
And Painting, mute and motionless,
  Steals but a glance of time,
But by the mighty actor brought,
  Illusion's perfect triumphs come —
Verse ceases to be airy thought,
  And Sculpture to be dumb.